

OF
CONSCIENCE.

Προφῆται δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλεῖτωσαν, καὶ διὰ ἄλλοι διακεινέτωσαν.

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OF CONSCIENCE.



Mong the many practicall errors which are gotten abroad into the World, a very large proportion there is of those which have either suckt their poison from, or disguised it under that specious venerable name of *Conscience*. That which the Philosophers could call their guardian Angel, and justifie the phrase by vouching none but Angelicall dictates from it : That which some good-natured Atheists did so revere that they defined the onely Deity in the World, and in proportion phansied nothing but God-like of it, is now by some Christians (like the true God among the Heathens) worshipt in so many corporeous shapes , that there is at length scarce any thing so vile (Phansy, Humour, Passion, Prepossession, the meanest worldly interest of the ambitious or covetous designer, like the Calves, the Cats, the Crocodiles, the Onions, the Leekes of *Egypt*) but hath the favour or luck to be mistaken for *Conscience*, and receive all the respect, that I say not adoration, that belongs to it.

It will be then but an act of justice and mercy, justice to truth, and mercy to the abused World, and withall a speciall preparative to a prudent reformation, to rescue so Divine a name from such heathenish usage, to restore it to its naturall primitive simplicity, and cast out all the false formes which it hath been forced to appear under. To which purpose all that I shall designe will be reduced to these two enquiries, 1. What is the proper notion of *Conscience*, 2. What is required to entitle a man to a good *Conscience*.

Sect. 1.

μένον εἰπεις
οὐειδήσθαι
θεού. Tatian.

Sect. 2.

Sect. 3.

For the former of these, what is the proper notion of *Conscience*, I shall labour to finde out not among the Scholastical definitions or divisions of it among humane writers, but onely by observing the force and use of the word in the Scripture, particularly the New Testament. And he that shall meet it there 32. times, and but take a view of it at every meeting, will sure come to some degree of acquaintance with it, and finde upon judgement reason to resolve, what for his ease I shall now lay before him.

Sect. 4.

That the word *oυειδησις*, *Conscience*, is no more then science or knowledge, (and therefore being but once used by the Greek translators of the Old Testament, *Eccles.* 10. 20. it is there set to expresse a word which is otherwise by them commonly rendred *oυσια* and *διγνωσις*) onely with a peculiar relation added to it, as that *knowledge* is in order to *action*. Thus *Tit.* 1. 15. when *νες* and *oυειδησις*, mind and conscience are distinguished, it is obvious to any to discerne the ground of that distinction, that former being properly the denotation of the faculty meerly speculative, or intellectuall; this latter, of the practicall judgement, or that whether act or faculty of the understanding soule, which extendeth to practise; the Apostle by that phrase, [*the minde and conscience are defiled*] meaning distinctly this, that this error in mens judgements, (which is the defiling of their mind) carries Un-christian practice along with it, (which is the defiling of the practicall faculty) this Judaicall mistake in their understanding is attended with Judaizing actions in their lives, the former apportioned to the *Ιεδαινοι μηδοι*, the *false Judaicall doctrines*, which relate to *νες* the *minde*, the second to the *εντολαι αρχεων αποφερομενων την αληθειαν*, the commands of men perverting the truth, v. 14. which relate to the *oυειδησις*, the *Conscience*.

Sect. 5.

For the clearing of which, (that it is such a practicall knowledge in the acceptiōn of the Scripture) if there need any light, you may have it from the survey of every place severally, and in speciall from this one, *1 Pet.* 2. 19. *This is thank-worthy, if dia oυειδησις θεος*, for *Conscience of God a man suffer grieve, &c. i.e. if for this obedientiall practicall knowledge of God (this knowledge of truth attended with a resolution not to disobey God, though it cost a man never so dear) he suffer grief, &c.*

This

This being premised, there is but one thing more to be added *Sect. 6.* to this matter, and it is this ; That we take notice of the severall wayes of aspect that *Conscience* hath upon *practise* ; One forward in the direct line, another backward, or by way of reflection ; which are ordinarily express by the double office of *Conscience*, 1. as a *custos* or *monitor*, advising and instructing and keeping us to our duty ; 2. as a *witnesse*, testifying to our selves and to God what we have done ; which is in plainer termes no more but this, That there are two sorts of *Conscience* ; 1. *Conscience of duty to be performed*, or full perswasion that such a thing ought to be done, or not to be done by me, a being resolved of the necessity or unlawfulness of any thing ; and 2. *Conscience of having performed*, or not performed it, a knowing or judging my selfe to have done well or ill. And under these two notions, all the severals in the New Testament, (and the one sole place of the apocryphall books of the Old) will be contained ; if you please, you may see how.

To the former kind belongs that famous place, *Rom. 13. 5.* *Tom Sect. 7.* *must be subject* (to the Supreame powers, v. 1.) *not only for wrath*, i.e. fear or danger of punishment, *the effect of wrath*, (the Magistrate being Gods Minister, an avenger for Wrath, or punishment to him that doth evill, v. 4.) *but also διὰ οὐεῖδον*, for, or because of *Conscience*, i.e. because it is the command of God, and consequently that which all inferiours (every soule) may, if they be not wilfully blind, know to be their duty, [to be thus subject.]

So i *Cor. 8. 7.* *For some wish Conscience of the idoll*, i.e. being *Sect. 8.* resolved in mind, that it is not lawfull to eate or tast of any μέρις, or τομή, part or portion of the idoll-feast, (whether εἰς εἰδωλον, at the idoll-table, or having bought it at the Shambles, as it seemes, was the fashion for those τομαὶ to be sold there at second hand, c. 10. 25.) accounting it unlawfull to eat any meat consecrated to that use, *do yet eat that* which is of this nature, *and by so doing their weak*, i.e. uninstructed, *Conscience is polluted*, i.e. they sinne against their Conscience, 'do that which they are perwaded they may not do, which though it be never so innocent a harmlesse thing in it self, (an idoll being simply nothing) yet to them which do it, when they think it unlawfull (and all have not knowledge, saith he in the beginning of the verse, i. e. are not sufficiently instructed in

their duty) it is pollution or sin, according to the fore-mentioned place, *Tit. 1.15.* *To the pure all things are pure;* [all things] i.e. all things of that nature, of which there he speaks, though in themselves indifferent, [are pure] i.e. may lawfully be used [by the pure] i.e. by them which are rightly instructed, but to the polluted and unbelievers (i.e. to them that are misled by Jewish fables, or by the dogmatizing of false Teachers, and brought to believe things to be prohibited by God, which are not prohibited) to them that are guilty of this kinde of *Judaisme*, and (as it is interpretative) *unbelief*) *there is nothing pure, but their minde and conscience are polluted*, both their understanding is in an error taking falsity for truth, and their practicall resolution is sinfull also, nay obliged to sinne, which way soever they turne themselves, whether they abstaine superstitiously, when they are not bound by God to abstaine, (which is the sinne of those that are subject to ordinances, *Col. 2.20.* of which I have spoken at large in another place) or whether they abstaine not, when they are perswaded that they ought to abstaine, which is *sinne against Conscience*.

Tr. of Will-worship.

Sect. 9.

+ From whence by the way you may observe the miserable lot of those which have not *γνῶσιν* knowledge in the beginning of that verse, which are misled to think any thing unlawfull which is lawfull, and continue in that error without seeking of light, which are thus *impure* (for to such *μηδέν καθαρός, nothing is pure,*) they are, as long as they remaine so, obliged to sinne, which way soever they take to, abstain, or not abstain. For though in things indifferent and uncommanded, simply to abstain were no sin, yet then to abstain *ὡς ἀποβλεποντοῦ*, as from a thing abominable or unlawful, is both by Scripture and the ancient Councils, in case of marriage and meats, every where condemned as sinfull: and yet on the other side to eat *without*, or against *Faith*, i.e. being doubtful whether it be lawfull or no, or being perswaded it is unlawful, is *sin*, (saith the Apostle) and there is great necessity to such of seeking (and in others great charity of helping them to) *γνῶσιν* instruction, or right information in this case, which is the onely cure for this unfortunate malady.

Sect. 10.

So again, *v. 10. οὐεἰδοῦσις διῖνεται the conscience of him that is weak, or (which is the same) v. 7. and v. 12. the weak conscience* [signifies

signifies that false perswasion of him that is in an error, an erroneous Conscience, weakness noting sicknesse in the Scripture style John 5.14.1 Cor. 11.30. and error being the disease or sicknesse of the soule, and that with a little improvement growing destructive and mortiferous; as in case he that hath that erroneous sick Conscience do act somewhat against Conscience, and so adde sinne unto error, for then *πνοεῖται ὁ ἀσθεός v. 11.* that sick man dies, perishes of that disease. So ch. 10.25, 27, 28, 29. the word Conscience is still in the same sense, for conscience or consideration of duty, and so 1 Pet. 2.19. forementioned.

So likewise 1 Pet. 3.21. where Baptisme is called *ἀποκτῆσαι εὐεργέτην* the answer of a good Conscience to God, the good Conscience signifies Conscience rightly instructed in its duty, as in baptizing those of full age it is supposed to be; which Conscience is then to answer and consent to all Gods proposals in Baptisme, (or the Ministers in Gods stead) such as [wilt thou forsake the Devill, &c.] and so the words will be interpreted in a sense proportionable to that of *denying ungodly lusts.* Tit. 2. 12. which there the appearing of Christ is said to teach us. For as lust proposes ungodly questiones to us, which we are bound to deny; so God in Baptisme is supposed to propose good questiones to us, which we are bound to grant, and stipulate the performance of them, and that is the *εὐεργέτην, the answer of a good Conscience to God* or to his questiones proposed in Baptisme, after the manner of ancient pacts among the Romans made by way of question and answer, as part of the *ritus solennis* or formalities of them.

But then for the second conception of the word, as it notes Conscience of what we have performed, or passing judgement on my self for what I have done, (and that either for any one individual act, or for the maine of our lives, our state; and that again either 1. acquitting, or 2. condemning, or 3. considered in a third notion common to both those, passing sentence in general) so shall you find it in many other places, and indeed in all the rest which we have not hitherto named.

For the first of these three species as it *acquitteth*, you have it Act. 23.1. *I have lived, (or behaved my self in all my conversation towards men, πεποίησαν, in all my politique, or publique relations)*

relations) with, or in all good conscience, in such a manner, as I cannot accuse my self of any thing done contrary to my Christian profession, or dignity of my Apostolical calling. So 1 Cor. 9. 12. the *Testimony of our Conscience* is express by what followes, that *in simplicity, &c. we had our conversation in the World.* So good Conscience is taken, 1 Tim. 1. 5. and 19. and 3. 9. and 2 Tim. 1. 3. Heb. 13. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 16. but above all you have a speciall place belonging to this first branch of the second in *Act. 24. 16.* ἀτεξόνοτος οὐεἰδῆνοις] we render it a *Conscience void of offence*, the meaning is, a confidence and assurance that he hath done nothing subject so much as to the censure of having scandalized others; for St. Paul being there accused by the *Jews* v. 5. 6. for three crimes, *sedition, heresy, and profaning of the Temple*, he answers to the first v. 12. to the 2d. v. 14. to the 3d. v. 16. 18. and his being purified in the Temple after the Jewish manner he makes an evidence of his innocence in that particular, a proof of his not having scandalized any Jew, which to have done, would have beene a fault in him, whose office it was to become *all things to all men*, that he might *gaine or save all*, and not to discourage or deterre any who might be gained by *compliance*; and the doing so, is it which is called being ἀτεξόνοτος *Iudaios* 1 Cor. 10. 32. *giving none offence to the Jews*, the very word used in the place of the *Acts*.

Sect. 14.

In the second place, the accusing or condemning Conscience is often mentioned also; *John 8.9.* *Convicted by their Conscience*, or reproved, some for one sin, some for another. So by intimation *Heb. 9.9.* where it is said of the Legal sacrifices that they could not *make perfect as pertaining to Conscience*, where the word [τελείωσις] rendered to *make perfect*, signifies in the sacred idiom [to consecrate, to make a Priest, whose office being προσεγγιζειν τῷ Θεῷ to draw near to God, proportionably τελείωσις κατα οὐεἰδῆνοις to perfect or consecrate as pertaining to Conscience signifies to give accessie with boldnesse to God, by taking of that guilt which formerly lay upon their Conscience, the same that v. 14. is called, to *purge the conscience from dead works*, to wash off that guilt of sin past, which hinders their approach to God, obstructs all entrance to their prayers, (for we know that God heareth not sinners, *Job. 9.31.* and *Isai. 1. 15.*) whereupon it is observable, that *Heb. 13.18.* when he bespeaks their prayers for him, he addes this reason to encourage

encourage them to do so. *For we trust we have a good Conscience,* that good Conscience being necessary there to have other mens prayers heard for them, as here to give themselves *accesse* to God in *prayer*. So *Heb. 10. 2. Conscience*, or *conscienciousaesse of sins*, and *v.22. Evill Conscience*, and so *Wisd. 17. 11.* there is mention of *wickednesse condemned by her owne witnesse*, and *prest by Conscience*.

And of the last sort, in the latitude common to both, are *Rom. 15. 2. 15. Rom. 9. 1. 2 Cor. 4. 2.* and *5. 11.* and *1 Tim. 4. 2.* all clear enough without the help of our paraphrase to add light to them.

Having thus marshalled all these places of Scripture into ranks, *Sect. 16.* and given some hints of generall insight into them, it now remaines that we return a while to the nearer survey of the two generall heads, and first of the former acceptation of the word, as it imports a monitor, or director of life, by which our actions must be regulated, and from the mistaking of which the chief inconvenience doth arise.

To which end, it will be absolutely necessary to settle and resolve but one question, what is that Rule or *κανόνας* of Conscience, from whence it must receive its regulation. For he that draweth a line of direction for another, must have a rule to draw it by, & that a streight exact one, or else the directions will not be authentick, and they which *walk ἀκερδῶς* exactly or conscientiously, must *κατ' κανόναν καὶ χεῖν* walk by rule, *Ph. 3. 16.* & *τὸ αὐτὸν φρεγτὸν* have their eye or thought alway upon that one thing, their rule of direction, or else be they never such *φρεγταλλοις* in the beginning of that verse, such *forward proficients*, their end may be *perdition*, *v. 19.* This when once we have done, the difficulty will soon vanish.

* And to this purpose I shall take that for granted which in *these* I never heard any doubt of, (though many of our actions look otherwise in *hypothesi*) that *law* is this onely rule; *κανόνας* and *νόμος*, rule and law being words of the same importance, and nothing fit or proper to regulate our actions, but that which the law giver, to whom obedience must be payed, hath thought fit to rule them by. To which purpose it is ordinarily observed that *ἀμαρτία, sinne*, or aberration from that rule by which we ought to walk (for so that word naturally signifies) is by *Saint John 1 Epist. 3. 4.* defined *ἀνομία*, which we render a *transgression of the law*.

In which place of St. John, though the truth is, (ἀμαρτία and ἀμαρτίας τοῖς denoting more then the bare Commission of sinne in that Author generally, viz. the wilfull perpetration of it, and an indulgence in, and habit of so doing) the word ἀμαρτία and ἀμαρτίας τοῖς must proportionably also signifie not only transgressing, but wilfull habituall contemning the law, being an *exēs*, or *without Law* (as the Idolatrous Atheist is said to be *without God in the World*) i. e. without any account or respect of it, (and so τοῖς τοῖς, ἀμαρτίας, Job. 31. 3. notes the greatest degree of sinfulness, we render it *workers of iniquity*, and so very frequently in the Septuagint we find ἀμαρτία, where we render the Hebrew by *mischief*) yet still the observation stands good, that law is the rule, in aberration from which all sin consists, and so ἀμαρτία is ἀμαρτία in both senses, the least degree of sin a deviation from the law, and a malicious contentious sinning, a malicious contemptuous deviation, or transgression; and so Saint Paul hath also resolved it, that where there is no law, there is no transgression, no *mischief*, Rom. 4.15. no going awry, when there is no rule proposed to go by.

Sect. 19.

This being so clear in its self, and yet through the mistakes, yea and impieties of the *world* become so necessary to be thus farther cleared; Two things there are which will hence evitably follow, the first Negative, the second Positive; The first or the Negative, that whatsoever undertakes to direct, or guide our actions, to tell us our duty, that this we must, that we may not doe, and hath not some law, (in force, and still obligatory to us) to authorize those directions by, is not *Conscience*, whatsoever it is.

Sect. 20.

1. Humour it may be, to think our selves bound to doe whatsoever we have a strong inclination to doe, it being a matter of some difficulty to distinguish between my naturall and my spirituall inclinations, the motion of my sensitive appetite, and my diviver principle, my lower, and my upper soule; and the former commonly crying louder, and moving more lively, and impatiently, and earnestly, then the other.

Sect. 21.

2. Phantasie it may be, which is a kind of irrationall animal *Conscience*, hath the same relation to sensitive representations (*those laws in the members*) which *Conscience* hath to intellectuall (*those laws of the mind*), and then, as Aristotle saith, *that in those creatures*

cares which have not reason, phansie supplies the place of reason: so they which have not, or will not have Conscience to direct them, phansie most commonly gets into its place. Or,

Thirdly, Passion it may be; Our fears will advise us one thing, our animosities another, our zeal a third, and though that be perhaps zeal of God, yet that zeal is a passion still, one of those which Aristotle hath defined in his Rhetoricks, being not *κατ' επιγνώσιν*, according to knowldg or Conscience, Rom. 10.2. for the Hebrew word, as I told you, is rendered by those two words promiscuously, *επιγνώσις* and *οντοστοις*, knowledge and Conscience. Or,

Sect. 22.

Fourthly, diabolicall suggestion or infulon it may be, an enthusiasm of that black spirit; as it is (or of some thing as bad in effect) infallibly, whensoever Rebellion, Sedition, Murther, Rapine, Hatred, Envie, Uncharitableness, Lying, Swearing, Sacrilege, &c. come to us under the disguise of Religion and Conscience: and therefore the Spirits must be searcht whether they be of God, or of the Devill; and no surer way to doe it, then by these and the like symptomes, these fruits and productions of that infernall Spirit, which so perfectly represent and own their parent, that none but blind or mad men or daemonicks can beleive them in earnest to come from God. Or,

Sect. 23.

Fifthly, False doctrine it may be, and that again set off, either by the Authority of the teacher, or by the dignity of some eminent followers and practicers of it, and then the Apostle calls it [*having mens persons in admiration*] or by the earliness of its representation, being imbibed and taken in first, swallowed and digested before the truth was offered to us, and then 'tis prejudice or pre possession, and this again alwayes affisted by the force of that old axiom, [*Intus existens, &c.*] and by that which is naturall to all habits, to be hardly movable; and yet further improv'd sometimes by pride and obstinacy, alwayes by selfe-love, which makes us think our owne opinions (*i. e.* those which we are already possell of) the truest; which in this case is in effect to think our luck the best luck, and the same which was obserued in one worst sort of Heathens, who, whatsoever they saw first in the morning, worshipt that all the day after; a choosing of persuasions as Countrey men choose Valentines, that which they chance to meet with first after their comming abroad.

Sect. 24.

Sect. 25.

Besides these, many other things it may be, and so, 1. 'tis oddes enough that it will not be *Conscience*, which pretends to be so ; and 2. it is certainly not *Conscience*, unlesse it produce some law for its rule to direct us by. And this was the *Negative* or *first* thing.

Sect. 26.

The second or the Positive thing which followes from the pre-mises, is this, that *Conscience* of duty in any particular action is to be ruled by that law which is proper to that action ; as for example : The *Christian law* is the rule of *Conscience* for Christian actions ; the *law of reason*, or morall law, for morall ; the *law nationall*, municipall, or locall, for civill ; the *naturall law of all creatures*, for naturall actions ; and the *law of scandall*, (a branch of the *christian law*) for matters of scandall ; and the *law of liberty*, for indifferent free actions. And as it is very irregular, and unreasonable to measure any action by a rule that belongs not to it, to try the exactnesse of the circle by the square, which would be done by the compasse, and in like manner to judge the Christianness of an action, by the law of naturall reason, which can only be judged by its conformity with the law of Christ, superiour to that of nature ; So will there be no just pretence of *Conscience* against any thing, but where some one or more of these lawes are producible against it ; but on the other fide, even in the lowest sort of actions, if they be regulated by the law proper to them, and nothing done contrary to any superiour law, even by this God shall be glorified, 1 *Cor. 10.31*. a kind of glory resulting to God from that readinesse of submission and subordination of every thing to its proper rule, and law, to which the great Creator hath subjected it, and of all lawes, to that suprem transcendent one, the law of Christ. And though some touches there are in the Scripture of each of these lawes, some *fibre*, or strings of them discernible there so farre, that there is nothing almost under any of the heads forementioned, but by the Scripture some generall account may be given of it ; and againe, though that of Scripture be the suprem law of all, and nothing authorizable by any inferiour law, which is contradicted or prohibited by that, yet is not that of Scripture such a particular Code or Pandect of all lawes, as that every thing which is commanded by any other law, should be found commanded there,

or

or be bound to prove its self justifiable from thence, any further then that it is not there prohibited, or thereby justly concluded to be unlawfull.

From whence by the way, I conceive direction may be had, *Sect. 2*, and resolution of that difficult practicall probleme, what a man should doe in case he be legally commanded by his lawfull superiour to doe what he may lawfully doe, which yet he is perswaded he may not doe, or doubteth whether he may or no. For in this case if he be not able to produce some plaine prohibition from some superiour law, as from that of Scripture, he cannot be truly said to be perswaded in *Conscience*, (which implies knowledge) of the unlawfulness of that thing, nor consequently hath he any plea for disobedience to that lawfull command of his Superiours. All that may be said, is, that he may from some obscure place misunderstood have cause or occasion to doubt whether he may doe it or no, and then, although doubting simply taken (*i.e.* where no command interposes) may keep me from doing what I doubt, yet it ought not to be of that weight, as to keep me from my lawfull Superiours lawfull command, because that very command is a sufficient ground to supersede my doubting, when I have no plaine prohibition of Scripture to the contrary, (which in this case I am supposed not to have; for if I had, then, first, it were not a lawfull command; and secondly, I should not doubt, but be assured) it being my duty, and part of my Christian meeknesse, in doubtfull matters to take my resolution from those whom God hath placed over me, and it being the sinne of dogmatizing to affirme any thing unlawfull for me or others to doe, which some law of God, &c. still in force, doth not prohibit; which sinne being added to that other of disobedience to my lawfull Superiours, will sure never be able to make that commence virtue, which was before so farre from any pretentions to that title.

Having proceeded thus farre in the search of the ground of *Conscience*, it were now time to reduce this operation to practice, and shew you, 1. What directions *Conscience* is able to afford from every of those lawes for the ruling of all actions of that kind; and 2. What an harmony and conspiration there is betwixt all these lawes, one mutually aiding and assisting the other,

Sect. 28.

and not violating or destroying it. But this were the largest undertaking that could be pitcht on in the whole circle of learning; *Ærodius's Pandecta rerum ab omni aye judicatarum*, and all the Schoolmens & Casuists volumes, *de legibus, de jure & justitia*, and on the Decalogue, would be but imperfect parts of this; I shall give you but one taste or *Ægys*, of it, by which the Reader will be perswaded to spare me, or rather himselfe that trouble.

Sect. 29.

The prime of these, the Christian law, is the rule of all actions that come within the sphear, sets down the nature of all Christian dutis of *piety*, and *love* of our brethren in generall, and more particularly of *Faith, Hope, Charity, Repentance, Selfe-deniall, taking up the Crosse, &c.* of *humility, meeknesse, mercifulnesse, peaceablenesse, obedience to superiours, patience, contentednesse*, and the like; and the relation of a Christian being a grand transcendent relation, there is no action imaginable, but may either in respect of the *matter, or motive, or principle, or circumstances*, offend against one of these, (and then, *malum ex quolibet defectu*, the least of these defects blemisheth it) and so conscience directed by that rule or law, will direct me either to doe it, or not to do it in that manner, and then 'tis not any compliane with, or agreeablenesse to any or all other laws, which will make this action Christian, which hath any such notable defect or blemish in it. Not to pursue this any farther, having thus named it, and shewed you the vastnesse of the sea it leads to, it will suffice to our present design to tell you, that from what is said these 3 Corollaries, to omit many others, will be deducible.

Sect. 30.

1. That it is not possible for Conscience (be it never so strongly perswaded) to make any action lawfull, which is not regulated by those rules, or laws which are proper to it, and reconcileable with the grand rule, the Christian law. Conscience can never transform *profanenesse* into *piety*, *sacrilege* into *justice* or *holiness*, *rebellion* into *obedience*, *faction* into *humility*, *perjury*, or *taking of unlawfull oaths* into *religion*, *rapine* into *contentednesse*, *inhumanity* into *mercifulnesse*, *adultery*, *fornication*, *divorces*, (save in case of adultery) or any *uncleanness* into *purety*, *labouring to shake a Kingdome*, (to remove the crosse from my own shoulders to another mans) into *taking up of the Crosse*; but contrarywise, if it be truly and univocally Conscience of duty, it will tell

tell me that every one of these foul titles belongs to every such action, (the Scripture being so clear in these particulars, that there is no place or excuse for ignorance or mistake) and by setting before me the terrors of the Lord, persuade me not to venture on any one such action upon any terms; or if I have ventured, it will smite and wound me for it, and drive me to timely Repentance; or if it doe not, 'tis either a cauterized *infensive conscience*, a *reprobate minde*, or else some of these *Images*, which even now I mentioned, mistaken for Conscience; or if it be a *full perswasion* of minde, that what I thus am about, I am obliged to doe, (if that be a possible thing in such matters, and under so much light) 'tis then in the calmest stile an erroneous Conscience, which is so far from excusing me (unless in case of ignorance truly invincible, which here is not imaginable) that it brings upon me the most unparalleld infelicity in the world, an obligation to sin which way soever I turn my self, on one side appearing and lying at my door the guilt of committing that sin which I have so mistaken, and on the other, the guilt of omitting that (though sin) which my Conscience represented to me as duty; and nothing but repentance and reformation of judgement first, and then of practice, will be able to retrive the one or the other.

The second Corollary will be this; That 'tis the most unreasonable insolence in the world, for them that can swallow such Camel-sins as these without any regrets, nay with full approbation, and direction (perhaps) of Conscience, (if that may be called Conscience which is so divided from, and contrary to *knowledge*) yet to scruple and interpose doubts most tremblingly, and most conscientiously in matters of indifference, not so much as pretended to be against the word of God, (and so within the law of Christian liberty, that they may be done if we will) and yet over and above their natural indifference commanded by that authority, in subjection to which the Christian vertue of obedience consists; and all this either, First, upon no ground of Conscience at all; but only that 'tis contrary to their *Phansie*, their *Humour*, their *Prepossessions*; or, Secondly, because it is a restraint, upon their Christian liberty, which yet Christ never forbid to be restrained *quoad exercitium*, as far as belongs to the exercise of it, but

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but hath permitted sometime the care of not offending the weak brother, *i. e.* Charity, and sometime Obedience to lawfull superiours, to restraine it, (for in things indifferent they may not restrain, there can no obedience be payed to them;) or, Thirdly, because they are offensive (though not to them, yet) to others, who are perswaded they are unlawfull; Whereas 1 that perswasion of those others is erroneous, and not sufficient to justifie disobedience in themselves, much lesse in other men, in case of lawfull humane command; And 2 that their censuring of such indifferent actions, *i. e.* being *angry without a cause*, may be greater matter of scandall, and so more offensive to others, and more probable to work upon them to bring them by that example to be so angry also, then the doing that indifferent action, mistaken by others, and condemned for unlawfull, would be to bring them to transcribe that reprobated samplar, *i. e.* to doe what they thus condemne; all men being far more apt and inclinable to break out into passions, then into acts against Conscience, and so more likely to be scandalized or offended, or infnared, by following the former, then the latter example, to sin (for company or after another man) by censuring whom he censures, which is, being angry without a cause; then by doing what they are advised and resolved they ought not to doe, which is sinning against Conscience. Or, Fourthly, because they are against their Conscience to do, whilst yet they produce no law of God or man against them, and so in effect confess there is nothing in them against Conscience; unlesse, as before was noted, they wilfully æquivocate in the word *Conscience*; which will and skil of theirs, as it will not make any thing unlawfull, which before was indifferent, so will it not conclude ought, save onely this, that they which are so artificious to impose on others, and form scruples where there were none, would not be thought the likeliest men to swallow grosse sins under the disguise of virtues, or if they do so, will have least right to that only antidote of invincible ignorance to digest them.

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The third Corollary will be this, that scrupulousnes of conscience in some lighter lesse important matters (if it may be supposed excusable, as a weaknesse of an uninstructed minde, joyned with good symptome of tenderneſſe or quick ſenſe, yet)

can

can never hope to be accepted by God by way of commutation or expiation for grosser sins, so that he that falleth foully in any confessed sin, should fare the better at the great day of account, or be in less danger of being cast out of Gods favour for the present, because he is over-scrupulous in other things: For sure this were a strange way of supererogation to pay one arrear to God by running into another with him, to discharge a debt by owing more. And yet this is an error which may seem worth the pains of preventing, it being so notoriously seen, that some men, which profess to have care of their ways, and must in charity be believed to have so, go on confidently in grievous sins, which they cannot but know will damn without repentance, (the sentence of not inheriting the Kingdome of God, Gal.5. being so distinct, and punctuall, and absolute, and indispensable against them) and yet have no antidote to rely on for the averting that danger, but onely this of their exactnesse and scrupulousnesse in things indifferent; which if they shall say they doe not confide in, they are then obliged in conscience, and charity to their brethren (who may follow them to this precipice) either to give over hoping, or to set to purifying, without which there is no true ground of hope. This hint puts me in minde, that there is another part of my designe still behind, belonging to the second notion of Conscience, to examine,

What 'tis that is required to entitle a man to a good Conscience; which will briefly be stated by premising what before was mentioned, that the good Conscience belongs either to particular single performances, or to the whole state of life and actions. To the first there is no more required, but that that particular action be both for matter and circumstance regulated by the rule, or rules which are proper to it, and have nothing contrary to any superior transcendent rule. As that my meal be with sobriety and thanksgiving, my almes with cheerfulness, liberality, discretion, done in gratitude and obedience to God, and mercifulnesse to my brother, without reflection on my own gain or praise in this World. But for the Good Conscience, which belongs to the whole state of life and actions, which is called a good Conscience in all things, Heb. 13. 18. or a good Con-

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science consisting in having a good conversation in all things (for so the * punctuation in the Greek will direct rather to render it, [we have a good conscience, willing to live well, (or , have an honest conversation) in all things]) there the difficulty will be greater. And yet two Texts there are which tend much to the clearing and disinvolving of that one, 1 Pet. 3.16. Where διαδίκουσιν νοήσιν, Good Conscience, in the beginning of the verse, is explained in the close by διαδίκη χειρού ἀναστοθή, a good conversation in Christ, or a good Christian conversation, or such as now through Christ, by the purport of the second Covenant, may and shall be accepted for good. Where the word [conversation] denoting first the actions and behaviour both toward God and man, and secondly, the whole course and frame of those actions, (wherein it seemes a good Conscience consists) cannot better be explained then either by the Apostles πεντεπάτερος πεντεπάτερος, an accurate exact Walking, Eph. 5.15. or the phrase to *Titus*, c. 2.12. living soberly and righteously and godly in this present world ; the first respecting our duty to our selves, or actions, as private men, the second, our duty to our brethren, in our more publike capacities, the third, our duty to God as Creatures, Men, and Christians ; or Saint Luke's character of *Zachary and Elizabeth*, Lnk. 1.6. Walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless ; Walking blameless, In all : Universall sincere goodness, (not entire or perfect without ever sinning, but) considered with the rules of intemperance, or moderation of strict Law, (which is now part of the νοοτρίσιον, the Gospel-law, by which a Christian is to be tryed, as equity is a part of the municipall Law of this land ; Such is mercy for frailties and infirmities, and grosser lapses recovered and retracted by repentance) now under the Gospel, so as to be acceptable to God in Christ ; which was intimated (as in the εἰς χριστὸν, in Christ, 1 Pet. 3.16) in the former part of that verse, and their character σιναῖς εἰνών τῷ Θεῷ, righteous before God : Which phrase [Before God] hath a double intimation woth observing in this place, first of the perseverance or perpetuity of that righteousness, (as opposed to the temporary of the hypocrite) for the phrase, εἰνών τῷ Θεῷ [before him] refers to the shew-bread of old, Exod. 25.30. which was to be set before God always ; and therefore is sometime called Εὐθύτον the bread

bread of faces, or בְּפָנָיו, bread before his face, literally ἵρισμα, before him, and sometimes, בְּפָנָיו חַמְמִין, perpetuall bread, and secondly, of the acceptation or reception in the sight of God, for that again was the end of setting the bread alwayes before God, that God looking on it might accept them; and so righteousness before God, is such righteousness as God will please in the Gospel to accept of, as when visiting the fatherlesse, &c. *Jac. 1. 27.* is called, Religion pure and undefiled before God the Father; it noteth such a degree of unblemish'd purity, not as excluded all sin, but as God in Christ would (or hath promised to) accept of. And the same phrase therefore is in another place of the same Chapter, *Luke 1. 75.* rendred by our Church in the Gospel for Midsummer day by these words, such as may be acceptable for him.

Which being all taken into the description of a good conscience, that it is such a continued good conversation as God now under the Gospel promiseth to accept of; the onely difficulty behinde will be, what that is which God promiseth to accept of; To which end, it will be very instrumentall to take in that other place which I promised, and that is that forementioned, *Heb. 13. 18.* where the *Good Conscience* is evidenced (or the ground of confidence that he hath a good conscience, demonstrated) by this [εν ταῖς καλοῖς ἔργοις ἀναπτεῖται, willing, or resolving, or endeavouring to live honestly, or to have honest conversation in all things. From whence the onely thing which I desire to collect is this. That the sincere resolution or endeavour to live honestly in all things (which I remember, one of our ancientest Church-writers St. Cyril of Jerusalem calls, σάνμα δικαιοπεγγεῖν, and opposes it to ἔργα, works) in the Scripture nomination of a good conscience, or the μέγας τραπεζας δικαιος, that great treasure of confidence to all which have it; that ground of mature persuasion for any, that he hath, or shall by God be allowed, and acknowledged to have a good Conscience.

And if it be farther demanded, what is necessarily required, *Sect. 35.* (and how much will be sufficient) to denominate a man Such, what is the *minimum quod sic* of this sincere resolution, or endeavour, although that, I confess, will be hard, if not impossible, to define in such a manner, as shall come home to every

particular, (the proportions of more or lesse, knowledge or strength, the inequality of the talents of illuminating and assisting grace still interposing and making a variation) yet will it not be matter of much difficulty to give some generall advertisements, and ~~recomend~~, which will be acknowledged as soon as mentioned, and being put together, and by each man singly applyed to his particular case, by way of self-examination, will be able to tell him in some measure, whether he hath a good Conscience or no. And the first of these will be, That

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Acts and habits of sin in the former (heathen or unregenerate) part of the life, of what nature (and clothed with what aggravations) foever, if they are now retracted and renounced by repentance (as that signifies not onely a sorrow, but a thorow change) are reconcileable with a good conscience. The truth of which is clear, first, because the Gospel allows place for ~~repentance~~, and promises rest to the heavy laden, so he come unto Christ, and mercy to him that confesseth and forsaketh. Secondly, because the sincerity of resolution and endeavour now, (which is all that is required to a present good Conscience) is reconcileable with past sins, even of the largest size. Thirdly, because Saint Paul himself, which was once a Saul, can yet say confidently, that he hath a good Conscience. And fourthly, because (which I shall a little enlarge on) the sin against the Holy Ghost, which alone is by the Gospel made uncapable of remission, is, as I conceive, no act, no nor course of any speciall sin, but a state of finall impenitence, a continued persevering resistance of all those faving Methods, which are consequent to the descent, and are parts of the office of the Holy Ghost.

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To which purpose I shall give you one hint, which may persuade the preferring of this opinion before the contrary, and it is by observing the occasion of Christ's delivering those words concerning the irremissibleness of speaking against the holy Ghost. Those words are delivered by Christ both in St. Matthew and St. Mark upon occasion of that Speech of the Jews, that Christ cast out Devils, by the Prince of Devils, which was clearly a blaspheming or speaking contumeliously against Christ himself, or the Son of man; and there is no passage in the Text which can conclude that that Speech of theirs was by Christ called the

the *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, but rather the contrary, that it was a *blasphemy onely against the Sonne of Man*; for 'tis apparent that Christ, *Mat. 12.15.* for the space of six Verses sets himself to convince them of the falsity of that Speech, (which probably he would not have done, if they, to whom he spake, had been in an irrecoverable irreversible estate of blasphemy. For that he should take such pains onely to leave them unexcusable ; 1. There was no great need, in this case they were so already ; 2. 'Tis a mistake to think that Christ doth so at any time, they are bowels of mercy and not designs of mischieving, or accumulating their sin, and judgements, which incline him to call and knock, and labour to convince sinners) and having done that, doth both invite them to repentance by shewing them the possibility of pardon yet, and give them an admonition able to shake them out of all impenitence, by telling them the danger which attended, if the onely last Method of working on them which was yet behinde, did not prosper with or work upon them. This is the importance of that 31. and 32. Verse concerning *the speaking a word, i. e. standing out against the Sonne of man* on one side, and *the Holy Ghost* on the other ; the summe of which is this, there shall be by the comming of the Holy Ghost a possibility of pardon and means of reformation for those that resist and hold out and even Crucifie Christ (as by the comming of Christ, there was for those that shold beleeve on him, though they had formerly lived disobedient unto God the Father, resisted those Methods of mercy used on them under the old Testament) for *them that speak a word, i. e. by an Hebraisme doe an action (of affront, of injury, of contumely) against Christ*, yea that resist and beleeve not on him, but conceive and affirm him to *cast out Devils by the power of Beelzebub*, (which was as contumelious a thing as could be said of him) but when Christ shall be taken from the Earth, and the holy Ghost shall be sent downe to convinee the World of that great sinne of Crucifying Christ, and to settle in the Church of God such an orderly use of all Gospel-means that may tend to the bringing sinners to repentance) the use both of the *Word* and *Sacrament* and *Censures*, and all other things necessary to that great end of working on the most

contumacious) that if this preuale not, there is little hope left of ever working on such perversenesse ; then 'tis to be resolved, that those that thus stand out against all those saving methods of Gods last economy, shall be left uncapable of any good, of any, whether means of yet-farther-working on them, or of pardon either in the Church, or in Heaven, there being no mote persons in the God-head now behinde, (unless we will change the Christians Trinity into Pythagoras's *receditus*) nor consequently means in the providence of God, for the reducing of, or obtaining mercy for such. By this 'twill appear, that this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not any one act, no nor habit of sin, (particularly not that speaking against Christ there, which you will also guesse by St. Luke, who mentions not that speech of theirs concerning his casting out Devils by the Prince of Devils : and yet sets down this speech of Christ, of the irremissibility of this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, *Luke 12.10.* which argues, that this hath no neer relation to that) but a finall holding out against, and resisting the whole office of the Holy Ghost, and all those gracious methods consequent to it.

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To which I shall onely adde in reference to my present purpose (that there may be no place of doubting even to him which will not receive my interpretation of this place) that even by those which conceive it to be some speciall kinde of sin, yet the unpardonableness of it is acknowledged to arise from thence, that 'tis impossible for any such to repent, yet not for any that repents, to finde pardon and mercy, which is sufficient for the confirmation of my present Proposition.

'Tis true indeed, that he that is sold a slave of sin, the unregenerate carnall man, is, whilst he is so, in a most hopeless, comfortlesse estate ; and if he have any naturall conscience lefthim, it must needs be a kind of fiend and fury within him, *No peace to such wicked, saith my God* ; and 'tis as true that the recovery of such a man out of the Grave of rottennesse, that Lazar-state in sin, is a miracle of the first magnitude, a work of greatest difficulty, (Christ groanes at the raising of him that was four dayes dead and putrifid in the Grave) and costs the sioner much dearer to be raised out of it ; *Saul is struck down in his march towards Damascus* blinde and trembling before his conversion ; but yet still when

when this conversion is wrought, he may have a good *Conscience* what ever his foregoing sins were.

And although the Apostles censure *Heb.6.6.* and *10.26.* light yet heavier upon those who after the knowledge of the truth and gift of the life to come, and participation of the holy Spirit relapse to their former sin, it being there affirmed that there is no possibility to renue them; or (as the Greek read it) for them to renue or recover to *repentance*, and consequently the sacrifice for sin [*εἰς τὴς ἀπολέσεται*] no longer belonging to, or remaining for them; yet doth not this hinder the truth of the present proposition: For 1. those places to the Hebrews belong not to the sins of the unregenerate life, which only now we speak of; but of the relapse after the knowledge of the truth. 2. Even in those places speaking of those sins, the doctrine is not, that there shall be any difficulty of obtaining pardon for them upon *repentance*, (for the subject of the Apostles propositions is the *μετανοόντες*; and *ἀμετανόντες*, men considered exclusively to *repentance*, as abiding in sin unreformed impenitent, and to such we designe not to allow mercy) but that this is so great a grieving and quenching of the Spirit of God, that it becommeth very difficult, and in ordinary course impossible for them that are guilty of it, to *repent*, *ταῦτα ἀπαντίζειν εἰς μετανοίαν* again to recover to *repentance*: It being just and ordinary with God upon such sins of those to whom he hath given grace, to withdraw that grace again, according to his method and economy of providence, exprest in the parable of the talents, [*from him that hath not made use of the grace or talent given, shall be taken away even that which he hath*,] and *Wisd.1.5.* *The holy Spirit of discipline will not abide where unrighteousness commeth in*; and so being thus deprived of that grace, 'tis consequently impossible that those should *ἀπαντίζειν*, in a neutral sense, *renue and recover*, or in an active reciprocal, *renue or recover themselves, to repentance*, though yet for God to give a new stock of grace it is not impossible, but only a thing which he hath not by revealed promise obliged himselfe to do; and therefore whether he will do it, or no, is meetly in his own hand and dispositive power, and that which no man hath ground to hope, and title to challenge from him. All which notwithstanding our present proposition stands firme, That where there is

ἀπαντίζειν.

is repentance, or true thorow-change, those former retracted acts or habits are reconcileable with good Conscience.

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The second this, that sins of *weaknesse of all kindes*, whether first, of ignorance, or secondly, of naturall infirmity; the one for want of light, the other for want of grace; or thirdly, of sudden surreption, such as both by the law of [*Si quis precipiti calore*] in the Code of *Justinian*, and by the municipall lawes of most Nations, are matter of extenuation to some crimes, to discharge them from capitall punishment, at least to make them capable of pardon; or fourthly, of daily continuall incursion, either for want of space to deliberate at all, or because 'tis morally impossible to be upon the guard to be deliberate alwayes; (*Opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum*) or fifthly, which through levity of the matter passes by undiscerned, and the like, are reconcileable with a good Conscience: because again, be a man never so sincerely resolute and industrious in endeavour to abstain from all sin, yet as long as he carries *flesh* about him, (which is such a principle of weaknesse, that ordinarily in the New Testament, the word *flesh* is set to signify *weaknesse*) such weaknesses he will be subject to, such frailties will be sure to drop from him. This, I remember, *Parisensis* illustrates handsomely; first, by the similitude of an armed man provided with strength and proesse, and wrestling with another *in lubrico*, on a slippery ground; who though neither weapons, nor strength, nor courage fail him, yet may he very probably fall, the slipperiness of the footing will betray him to that: or secondly, by an Horseman mounted on an unmanaged or tender-mouth'd horse, who cannot with all his skill and caution secure himself from all misadventures, the beast may upon a check come over with him, or getting the bit into the mouth run into the enemies quarters: or thirdly, by a City that is provided for a siege with works and men, and victuals, and ammunition, and yet by a treacherous party within, may be betrayed into the enemies hands: There is a Principle of weaknesse within like that slippery pavement, that tender-mouthed beast, that insidious party, which will make us still liable to such miscarriages, and nothing in this contrary either to courage or diligence, to resolution, or endeavour. And for such as these frailties, ignorances, infirmities, &c. so they be laboured

laboured against, and the meanes of preventing or overcomming them sincerely used. (whitch if it be done, you shall finde them daily wain in you; and if they doe not so in some measure, you have reason to suspect, and to double your diligence) there is sure mercy ia Christ to be had, (obtainable by daily confession, and sorrow, and prayer for forgiuenesse of trespasses) without any compleat conquest atchieved over them in this life. It being S. Pauls affirmation, very exactly and critically set down, *Rom. 5. 6.* that Christ ὡντος ἡμῶν ἀδενῶν, ὡς ἀσθενῶν ἀπέδειπνε, *we being weak, dyed for the ungodly,* to note the universall benefit of his his death for such *weak ones* and such sins as these to which mere *weaknesse* betrayes them. The very Doctrine which from that text at the beginning of our Reformation our reverēnd Bishop Mar-tyr did assert in his excellent Preface to his Explication of the Commandements.

Hooper.

To which purpose I shall onely adde one proof more, taken from the τὸ λογικὸν or rationall importance of S. Pauls exhortation, *Rom. 15. 1.* *We that are strong, saith he, must bear the weak-nesses ἀδενίατα, of them which are not strong, ἀσυνάτατοι;* and not please our selves, for v. 3. *Christ did not so, but, &c.* which reason sure must come home to both parts, the affirmative as well as the negative, (or else the Logick will not be good) and so the affirmative be that *Christ bare the infirmities of the weak;* and so again v. 7. [προσελάβετο ἡμᾶς] applied to the same matter he took us up when we were thus fallen. I might adde more, but I hope rather that I have said too much in so plain a point, and abundantly evinced the reconcileablenesse of such frailties with a good Conscience.

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A third thing is, that *The lusting of the flesh against the spirit is reconcileable with a good Conscience, so it be in him that walk-eth in the spirit, obeys the desires and dictates of that, and ful-filleth not the lusts of the flesh, Gal. 5. 16, 17.* There is no spiritually good thing that a man ever doth in his life, but the flesh hath some mutinyings, lustings, and objections against it, there being such a contrariety betwixt the commands of Christ, and the de-sires of the flesh, that no man, which hath those two within him, doth the things that he would. (For so 'tis, *īa μὴ ποιεῖς that you doe not, not that you cannot doe*) [*The things that he would*]

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(i. e. the things, which either he resolves to do, or takes delight in) those he doth not, i. e. either purely without some mixture, or still without some opposition of the contrary, or (as againe the place may be rendred) this opposition of these two one againt another tendeth to this, that we may not doe, or to hinder us from doing every thing that we would, as indeed we should do, were there not that opposition within our own breasts. This is the meaning of that 17 verse, which notwithstanding it followes verse 18. that if we be led by the spirit, if that be victorious over the contrary pretender, (as it may, though tother lust againt it) if the production be not *workes of the flesh, adultery, &c.* v. 19. but the *fruit of the spirit, love, peace, &c.* v. 22. againt such there is no law, no condemnation, no accusation of Conscience here or hereafter.

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For it must be observed, that there is great difference betwixt this lustyng of the flesh againt the spirit in them that are led by the spirit, Gal. 5. and the warring of the law in the members againt the law in the minde, which bringeth into captivity to the law of sinne, i. e. to it self, Rom. 7. For those in whom that latter is to be found, are there said to be *Carnall, sold under sin,* (as a slave was wont sub hasta to be sold) and so ~~are~~ ^{are} to be led by the flesh, and fulfil the lusts of the flesh, which is of all things most unreconcileable with that mans state, against whom there is no condemnation in Christ, Rom. 8.1. and so with a good Conscience.

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And if the resistance of the minde, or the law moral, of the spirit, or the law Christian, be sufficient to excuse that action or habituall course which is committed and lived in, in opposition to both of these, or while both of these check and contradict, then sure are sins againt Conscience become (if not the most excusable sins, yet) the more excusable for this, that they are againt Conscience; that wounding or contending of the minde, or the law of the minde being no other but the dictate, of the instructed Conscience (in them which know the law, Rom. 7.1.) which he that obeys not, but followes the law or command of sin againt it, hath not sure a good conscience, in our second sense as that signifies a conscience of well-doing or doing nothing againt rule of Conscience, for that this man in terminis is supposed to doe.

Having

Having now proceeded thus farre in the affirmative part in shewing what sinnes are reconcileable with a good conscience, I should now proceed to the negative part and shew what are not reconcileable therewith. But before I advance to that, there is one classis or head of sins, about which there is some question and difficulty of resolving, to which of the extrems it should be reduced, i. e. whether it be reconcileable, or unreconcileable with a good Conscience. And that is the single commission of some act of known sinne, which hath not the Apology of weaknesse to excuse it, and yet is not indulged, or persisted, or continued in; (for of those that are so, you shall hear anon in the eight proposition) but without delay retracted by humiliation and reformati-
on; For the stating and satisfying of which 'twill be necessary, first, to observe that

Any such act of wilfull sin, first, hath in it selfe a being, and so is capable of a notion abstracted from the retraction of it. Yea secondly, is a work of some time; and though it be never so suddenly retracted by repentance, yet some space there is before that retraction; and if we speak of that time or space, there is no doubt, but that act, first, is contrary to good conscience, and contracts a guilt, and consequent to that, the displeasure of God and obligation to punishment, which nothing but repentance can doe away: yea, and secondly, is a naturall means of weakning that habit of good, of sauciating and wounding the soul, and for that time putting it in a bloody direfull condition; and should God before repentance strike, for ought we know there would be no remission, and so fearfull would be the end of that soul.

But then secondly, if before God thus visit in justice, repentance interpose, (as in this present case we suppose it doth) if this plank be caught hold on instantly upon the shipwrack, if he that hath committed this act of carnality, &c. lye not downe, (after the manner of the Grecian Horses in S. Ambroses expression, *Qui cum cediderint, quandam tenent quietis & patientia disciplinam, ut taught when they fall in the race, not to strive or endeavour to get up againe, lye still on the ground with great filnesse and patience) walk not after the flesh, Rom. 8.1. Then presently is he set right again in Gods favour, upon (performance of the so-*

lemnities, as it were, payment of the fees of the court) humiliation, contrition, confession, and lowly supplications to God for pardon in Christ, and so then to him thus repaired there is no condemnation; beside the forementioned effects that attended that sinne at the time there is no future arrear behind in the other world.

Sect. 48.

As for the other effect of sin in this life, the wasting of the Conscience, or provoking of God to withdraw his grace, though any such act of wilfull sin may justly be thought to doe that also in some degree, first, to stop God from going on in his current of liberality; and secondly, to cast us back from that plenitude and abundance, which before in the riches of Gods bounty in Christ was afforded, and so much weaken our stock of grace, leave us much more infirme then we were before the commission; yet we find not any threat in Scripture that God will, upon this provocation of one single act not persisted in, presently withdraw all grace, but we have reason to hope what the article of our Church supposes; that in this case he leaves sufficient grace to enable that child of his, that thus falleth, by that his grace to return again.

Sect. 49.

And if that sad presage, *Heb. 6. 6.* seeme to any to withstand this, the answer will be prompt and easie, by observing that the word προστρεφεις, there [the fallers away] signifies more then some one single act of sin presently retracted again, even a generall apostacy in their practice, (if not in their faith) a return to their former unregenerate sins, (as the phrase ἐπιτλακεῖτε ἀπλόται [they being entangled are overcome] notes, *2 Pet. 2. 20.* a place perfectly parallell to this, and) as in this place the Ancients have generally interpreted. And then, though such indulgence in sin, such returning to the vomit or mire againe in that other place, doe provoke God to withdraw his grace necessary to enable them to repent, yea, and cast them back into a worse estate then they were in, not onely before such sinning, but even before their conversion, *2 Pet. 2. 20.* Yet that God will so punish with totall desfection any one act or commission presently retracted again, 'tis not affirmed here, nor any where else, that I have observed, but rather on the contrary, that he will visit them with chastisements which are a grace and a meanes to recall them, without any utter forsaking or taking of his loving kindnes from them, *Psal. 89. 33, 35.*

That

That this matter may be throughly cleared, I shall suppose this objection made against what hath hitherto been said of it, that it may seem by this doctrine, [that the regenerate man may be under Gods displeasure] that he that remains sanctified may be unjustified, for so he will be, if all his sins be not forgiven him, which they are not, if this act of sin not yet repented of, bee not forgiven. In answer to this, I shall reinforce my affirmation that of necessity it must be granted, if we beleive the Scripture, that any such act of sin unretracted by repentance, doth certainly stand upon the sinners score unremitted ; for that God (as some affirme) doth at the first act of my being justified forgive all my sins not onely past, present, but onely future too, can not be said, but upon a supposition that that man will never commit any such sinne against which the Gospel threatens perishing, *i. e.* any deliberate presumptuous sin, (which supposition if it were true, would inferre an impossibility of the regenerate mans thus sinning, nor assurance of his pardon without (or abstracted from the consideration of) his repentance, which is the onely point in hand) for if he doe, then upon confession and forsaking, there is promise of mercy, and not otherwise ; and in bref without repentanre there is no remission : and therefore 'tis observable, that they which thus affirm, finde themselves enforced to fly to Gods omnipotence and immensity, to whom all things are present, by help of which they can conceive and resolve that at the time of that sins being upon him unrepented of, God yet seeing his future repentance as present, may seal his pardon, and then may by the same reason, doe so also before the commission ; the weaknesse of which arguing, I shall no farther demonstrate then by this rejoynder, that by the same reason it might be said, that a man is justified before he is born, which yet the objectors doe not affirm, but that at the time of his first conversion, be it at such a Sermon or the like, he was justified, and then all his past, present, and to come, forgiven him, which is as contrary to the notion of all things being present with God, as to say that this act of commission is not forgiven till it be repented of, for sure the time before that mans birth, and the time after it, are as truly present to God before all eternity, as the time of this commission and that repentance.

Sect. 51. The onely way for us to understand our selves or any thing that belongs to Gods actions concerning us, is that which the Scripture supposes and commands us to walk in, not the way of Gods secret counsels, (which if we knew, were no longer secret) not the way of Gods immensity, (which if it were intelligible by us, were not immensity) but the way of his revealed will, which is, that whensoever the sinner *repenteth* him of his sin, and *amends* his life, he shall have his sin *blotted out*, and *put out of Gods remembrance*, i. e. forgiven unto him, and not till then: and to suppose he may have remission before such repentance is to suppose God perjur'd who swears he shall not, and to lay falsity to the Charge of the whole Gospel, which resolves *except ye repent, ye shall all perish.*

Sect. 52. To all this I might farther add, that Gods justifying the faithfull man, is the approving his fidelity upon tryall of it, and so acquitting him (upon a ~~soulfull~~ or probation) from suspicion of hypocrisy, pronouncing him faithfull, or Evangelically righteous, and upon that, owning him as a friend, entring into League with him, as might appeare by Gods justifying *Abraham* and calling him friend (in the sense wherein they are Christs friends, which doe whatsoever he commands them, so approve themselves unto him) if it were now seasonable to examine that businesse. This being supposed, it would be most evident, that such an act of known deliberate sin committed in time of tryall, is quite contrary to *justification*, even as contrary as *Abrahams* refusing to beleive Gods promise first, or after to sacrifice *Isaac*, you may suppose would have been. Of which, the least that can be said, will be this, that such a falling is a shrewd blemish to sincerity, which will make it necessary for him that is guilty of it, to repair his credit with God by expressing a great sense of his mis-carriage, and by many future performances of constancy, and resolution, if ever he hope to be approved, or *justified* by him.

Sect. 53. But now having thus far confirmed this, and so rather strengthened, then weakened the objection, the next thing I shall desire may be observed is this, that every non-remission of a sin for some time, every displeasure of Gods, every not-imputing to righteousness, is not an utter intercision of justification, is not a calling all the former forgotten sins to remembrance, for to such

such only an Apostasie, or continued falling away from God, betrays the soul. For, the whole current of my life may approve my fidelity to God, though some one action be very contrary to it ; Nay secondly, a father may be displeased with his son for some one fault, and yet not disinherit him, nay upon farther provocation he may cast him out of his family, and yet afterward receive him into it again.

So that there are three degrees observable in this matter : first, *displeasure* ; secondly, *wrath* ; thirdly, *fury*. First, withdrawing of the Fathers favour, suspension of pardon, so 'tis in case of any such single act of sin presently repented of, considered before its retraction. Second, casting out of the family, totall intercision of mercy for that present, so 'tis in case of such sin persisted in indulgently. Third, utter finall irreversible abdication, so 'tis in case of finall obduration.

This may be illustrated, first by a vulgar, then by an ecclesiastical resemblance. Among friends, 1. there may be a matter of quarrell, dislike, displeasure, and one friend justly frown upon the other, yea, and keep some distance from him, and be really angry with him, for some act of injury done by him, contrary to the laws of friendship, which till he hath some way repaired, the friend may justly not pardon him, and so abstain for that present from the former degree of familiarity with him : but then 2. the injurious friend may continue as injurious still, and go on and persist in that course of falsenes or unfriendliness, and then the injur'd friend wholly forsakes his company, breaks off those bands of friendship with him, yet so as that upon the others relenting and amending, he may yet again return to him, and so that totall separation prove no finall one : 3. there is, upon obduration or no manner of relenting, a finall irreversible breach.

The ecclesiastical resemblance is, that of the three degrees of excommunication among the Jews, the first or lowest, was *nidus* separation, not totall turning out of either sacred or civil society, but remotion to a distance, that the offender should not come within four Cubits of any other, and so be denied the peace of the Church, and the familiar kind of Communion, which others enjoy. Above this there was *cherem* which was

was a totall exclusion or distermination with anathema's or execrations joyned with it, but yet was not finall ; then thirdly, there was *Schammatha* giving up to destruction or desolation, delivering up to Gods comming in judgement, and that was irreversible.

Seſt. 57.

Now for the full satisfying of the argument, (having already shewed you the state of this offender in respect of justification) it will onely be necessarie to adde one thing more, that the state of the same man as it respects sanctification, is parallel and fully proportionable to the state as it respects justification, and so the objection will quite fall to the ground.

Seſt. 58.

To the clearing of which you must know that sanctification may be conceived in a double notion, 1. as a gift of Gods, 2. as a duty of mans. To prevent mistake, this I mean, God gives the grace of conversion and sanctification, and he that is effectually wrought on by that grace, is converted and sanctified ; this is it which I mean, by the first notion of sanctification, as it is a gift of Gods : But the man thus converted and sanctified, i. e. thus wrought on and effectually changed by the Spirit of God, is bound by the Gospel-law to operate according to this principle, to use this talent, and this is called, *to have grace*, *Heb. 12. 28.* i. e. to make use of it to the purpose there specified of *serving God iusticew* (i. e. either *well-pleasedly*, cheerfully, willingly, or *well-pleasingly*, so as God may and will accept) *in righteousness and godly fear*, according to the notion of *Having* in the parable of the talents, where 'tis said that *to him that hath shall be given*, i. e. to him that makes use of the talent intrusted to him, operates accordingly, doth what that enables him to doe, offends not against it by idlenesse, or by commission of contrary sins, which he that doth, is the *non habens*, *he that hath not* there, from *which shall be taken away*, &c. And this having of grace is it which I mean by the second notion of sanctification, as it is a duty of mans, which I conceive is meant by the Apostle, when he saith, this *is the Will of God, even your Sanctification* ; and, *he which hath this hope purifies himselfe* ; and, *let us cleanse our selves from all filthinesses perfecting holiness* : all which places suppose the thing spoken of, to be the *duty* of man, which by the help of Christ *strengthening* him, he is *able* to performe, and therefore

therefore upon the supposition of *Gods working in him both to will and to doe*, to will, by sanctifying, to doe, by affilting grace, he is incited and exhorted by the Apostle, *to work out his own salvation.*

This being thus cleared, 'twill be easily granted in the second *Sect. 59.* place, that every such act of deliberate commission as wee now speak of, is contrary to sanctification in this latter notion, contrary to the *duty* of the sanctified man, from which breach of duty it was, that we bound him before under that guilt, which nothing but repentance could ridde him of; and if you mark it, that is the onely thing which contracts a guilt, the doing somewhat contrary to *duty*, and so the want of this second notion of Sanctification, it is the want of sanctified operations, which interposes any rubs in the businesse of our justification, and not so properly that wherein God onely was concerned, his not giving *grace*; guilt being still a result from sin, and sin being a *breach of the law*, a contrariety to duty and not to guilt; and though he that hath not received the gift of sanctification be not justified, yet the cause of his non-justification then, is not, in proper speaking, Gods not having given him grace to sanctify, (for that is but a negative thing, and cannot produce non-justification, which is in effect a positive thing, by interpretation, signifying condemnation, two negatives making an affirmative, non-justifying being non-remitting of sin, and that the actuall imputing of it to condemnation) but the sins of his former and present impenitent unsanctified life.

This also being thus cleared, I shall onely adde a third thing, *Sect. 60.* and then conclude this matter, that in the same proportion that any such act of sin doth unjustify, it doth unsanctify also, i. e. shake and waite, though not utterly destroy, that sanctified state that before the man was in, by the gift and grace of God.

For as there were three degrees of provocation in the matter of justification, so are there also in this of sanctification, the first, *grieving the Spirit of God, Epb. 4.30.* resisting it, trashing of God in his course of grace and bounty towards us, putting our selves under *niddni*, as it were, in respect of Gods grace, as well as his favour, and so weakning our stock of sanctity, and this the deliberate act of sin may be thought to doe. The second, is *quenching* *Sect. 61.* *of*

of the Spirit, 1 Thes. 5. 19. putting it quite out, rebelling and vexing his holy Spirit, IJ. 63.10. a totall extinction of grace, the *Chorem* that bringe the present curse, or *anathema* along with it; and this is not done by one sin not persisted in, but onely by a habit, or indulgent course of sinne; and the third, is the *despight*, or *doing despight to the Spirit of Grace*, Heb. 10. 29. that which is proportioned to *Scammatha*, that makes the finall irreversible separation between us and Gods sanctifying grace, the first did not wholly deprive the sinner of all grace, no nor of sufficient to enable to repent; the second did so for the present; the third did so finally also.

Sect. 62.

If you will now demand what are the effects and consequents of that displeasure of God, which this single act of sin brings upon the offender; I answer, that I have in some measure answered that already, shewed you at the beginning many lugubrious effects of it; and if that be not sufficient to satisfie you, or to shew you the non-remission of such sinne till it be retracted by repentance, I shall then proceed one degree farther yet, to tell you,

Sect. 63.

That the method of Gods dealing in this case (of such single acts of commission) seemeth by the Scripture to be after this manner. Upon any such commission, Satan is wont to accuse that man before God, [Such or such a regenerate child of thine is fallen into such a sin, and so into my hands as the Lictor] then to desire, or require solemnly, to *have him to winnow*, by inflicting punishments upon him; and God yeelds many times to this demand of Satans, delivers the offender up to him in some limited manner.

Sect. 64.

To which delivering, though temptations (or afflictions which ordinarily are signified by temptations in Scripture) are constantly consequent, yet not utter desertion or withdrawing of grace, but allowing of strength sufficient to victory, *δύναμις τῆς πενιχρῆς, ability to bear*, 1 Cor. 10.13. *εκβασιν, passage out* of those difficulties in that same place, *ἀπόστραγχειν, sufficient grace*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. and assistance of his faith, that it fail not totally, (which is the importance of Christs having prayed for Peter, Luke 22. 32. his intercession being a powerfull intercession (as may appear by his [Father, I knew that thou hearest me alwayes, Joh.11.42.] and so

so in effect, the obtaining from his Father, and actuall conferring on his Disciple the grace which he prays for.) And therefore it is observable, that as those which are thus accused and demanded by Satan, are generally such as, were it not for this present particular commission, would passe both with God and him, for faithfull Disciples and good Christians, and therefore doe still retain that title, (as appears by the word ἀδελφῶν, when Satan is called the *accuser of them*, Rev. 12. 10. καθίγοες ἀδελφῶν, the *accuser of the brethren*, or the faithfull, it seemes they are faithfull still, though they have been guilty of some act, for which he thus accuseth them, and so he is called, ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν, 1 Pet. 5. 8. the *plaintiffe or enemy*, ἐν δίκῃ, of *you*, i. e. the *elect*, to whom he writes, c. 1. 1.) so the end of yeelding to Satans request in delivering them up to him is also gracious & fatherly, *ira παιδεύθωσι*, that they may be *disciplined*, or taught *not to blaspheme*, 1 Tim. 1. 20. *ira ἐπταργῆ*, that he may be *ashamed*, 2 Thess. 3. 14. *ira πνεῦμα σωθῆ*, that the *spirit may be saved*, 1 Cor. 5. 5. Whereupon it is, that the Fathers so clearly resolve it far better, and more eligible to be delivered up to Satan, then to be delivered up to ones self, or ones own affections or desires; the first of them being the ordinary punishment of some act, or acts of sin on purpose to recall to repentance; the second being the great plague of spirituall desertion, inflicted on indulgent continuers in sin, the first of them a mark of their not-yet-totall abdication, their continuance in son-ship whom God thus *chastens* here, that he *may not condemn them with the world*; the second, of their being cut off from that prerogative, whom God thus forsakes.

To which purpose, of Gods dealing mercifully with his servants in case of single trespasses presently retracted by repentance, (so far as not to inflict any grand spirituall punishment upon them, such as absolute desertion, or utter disinherizon) I conceive an Image represented to us in Christ's command to his disciples, how oft they should forgive the trespassing brother, *Luke 17. 4. If he trespasseth against thee seven times a day, and seven times a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive*; where *trespassing seven times* is a phrase, for [how oft soever he trespasseth] the word [forgive] notes the obligation to punishment without forgiveness, and the interposing the word [Repent]

Sect. 65.

proportioned to every *trespass*, shew the necessity of that condition to wash off that guilt ; and the word [*Turn*] prefixt to that, argues the *Repentance* unavailable, if it contain not *turning* in it ; upon which, forgiveneſſe being there commanded, if we shall now adde that other place, *Mat. 5. 36.* where Gods mercy to us, is made the measure of our mercy to our brethren, the argument will come home to prove that God doth ſo deal with us, and consequently that every ſuch act of ſin contracts a guilt, which is never pardoned but upon *repentance*, that upon the ſpeedy performance of that duty the patient is preserved from any heavy ſpirituall punishment, which would otherwife attend that ſin.

Sect. 66.

What we have hitherto ſaid on this particular, will shew the danger of every act of deliberate ſinne, and yet withall the difference betwixt ſuch ſingle acts preſently retracted by *repentance*, and the like persisted, or continued in. To which purpose 'twill be worth the while to behold what we finde recorded of *David*. He, we know, had been guilty of ſeverall acts of ſin, mark't and censured in the Word of God ; and ſome of them ſuch, as for them he was in a manner delivered up to *Satan* to be contumeliously uſed (as he ſeems to conceive from *Shimei*'s cursing of him, 2 *Sam. 16. 10.* For *Shimei* being an instrument of *Satans* in cursing, and *Satan* thereto permitted by God upon ſome crime, for which he had accused him to God, he there calls it, *Gods ſaying to Shimei, Curse David.*) And yet because he continued not with indulgence in any of them, (his heart preſently ſmiting him, as in the caſe of numbring the people, and recalling him to instant reformation) ſave onely in that concerning *Uriah the Hittite* (wherein it appears that he continued near the ſpace of a year, from before the conception till after the birth of the child, as is clear by the time of *Nathans* comming to him, 2 *Sam. 12. 1.*) 'tis therefore left upon record by God : That *David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the daies of his life, ſave onely in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, 1 King. 15. 5.*

Sect. 67.

From whence although I ſhall not conclude, that God ſaw no other ſinne in *David* but that in the matter of *Uriah*, (because

I know he saw and punish't that of numbring the people, and for that other though not acted, yet designed under oath against *Nabal*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 22. *Abigail* discernes that it was a causleſſe ſhedding of bloud, and an act of Revenge, v. 31. and ſo no ſmall ſin in Gods ſight) yet 'tis clear, that the ſin in the matter of *Uriah*, that only ſin continued in for any long time, made another manner of separation between God and *David*, contracted another kinde of guilt, (and was a far greater walter to Conscience) then any of thoſe other more ſpeedily retracted ſins did, was the on-ly remarkable ~~cauſe~~ drawing back, or turning aſide from obe- dience to God, the only grand defection, shaking off Gods yoke, and ſo the only chafme in his regenerat'e ſtate.

These four propositions being premiſed, whereof three were affirmative, and this laſt of a middle nature, the reſt will be negative; as

Fifthly, that Hypocrifie is not reconcileable with a good Con-
ſcience. I mean not Hypocrifie which conſiſts in the concealing
from the eyes of men the ſins of frailties he is guilty of: for ſu-
poſing thoſe frailties to be what they are, i. e. acknowledg'g in
them a guilt proportionate to their nature, I cannot ſee why
the bare deſire to conceal them from the eyes of men (separa-
ted from the ſins or frailties themſelves, and from any treache-
rous deſigne in ſuch concealing) ſhould be thought to ſuperadde
any farther degree of guilt; when on the other ſide the publick-
neſſe of a ſinne is an aggravation of it, makes it more scandalous,
and ſo more criminous alſo. Nor againe doe I mean that hypo-
crifie, which is the taking in any thought of the praife of men
(and the like) in our beſt actions; for as long as we have fleſh
about us, ſome degrees of this will goe near ſometimes to inſinu-
ate themſelves, & then though they prove blemiſhes to thoſe beſt
actions, and by anticipating the payment and taking it here be-
fore hand, rob us of that heavenly reward hereafter, which would
otherwile be rendred to us according to thoſe workes, yet ſtill being
but ſpots of ſons, reconcileable with a regenerat'e estate, (as the
ſtraw and combustible ſuperſtructi'on, is (in S. Paul) compatible
with the true ſubſtantiall foundation) they will be reconcileable
with good Conscience alſo, which is alwayes commensurate to
a regenerat'e estate.

Sect. 70.

But the hypocrisie, which I mean is, first, that which is opposite to (and incompatible with) sincerity ; first, the deceiving of men, with a pretence of piety putting off the most unchristian sins, having no more of Christianity then will serve to mischiefe others, i.e. only the pretence of it to disguise the poyson of a bitter heart. Secondly, the deceiving of God, or thirdly, his owne soul, not dealing uprightly with either ; and nothing more contrary then this to a good Conscience.

Sect. 71.

Secondly, the maimed mutilate obedience, the compounding betwixt God and Satan, the *Samaritans* fearing the Lord and serving their own gods, joyning others with God, and paying to them a respect equall or superiour to that which they pay to God, serving Mammon and God, or Mammon more then God. Or

Sect. 72.

Thirdly, the formall profession, the *χρήμα* or out-side garbe of godlinesse, not joyning the inward, but making a meer pageant of piety, denying the power thereof. Or

Sect. 73.

Fourthly, the hypocrisie of the wisher and woulder, that could wish he were better then he is, could be well pleased to *dye the death of the righteous*, to have all the gainfull part, the revenue and crown of a good Conscience, but will not be at the charge of a conscientious life. Or

Sect. 74.

Fifthly, the hypocrisie of the partiall obedient, that is a *περιστολέπτης* of duty, chooses out the easie, smooth, pliable doctrienes of Christianity, the cheap or costlesse performances, the *αδιάταρος εὐέβετας*, will serve the Lord his God of that which costs him nothing, will doe some things that have nothing contrary to passions in general, or particularly to his passions, like *Herod* that could hear *John Baptist* gladly, be present at as many Sermons as he could wish, (and many the like painlesse performances) but when the weightier matters of the law expect to be taken up also, cannot submit to such burthens. Or

Sect. 75.

Sixthly, the hypocrisie of the temporary, which abstains only as long as the punishment is over his head, and awes him to it, or as long as he meets with no temptations to the contrary ; both which what place they have in the deathbed repentance even when it is not onely a sorrow for sin, but a resolution of amendment also, I leave it to considered. Or

Seventhly,

Seventhly, the hypocrisy of those which commit evill that good may come of it, who venture on the most un-christian sins for Gods glory, accept the person of the Almighty, do injustice for his sake, or rather suppose him impotent, and fetch in the Devill of their own vile lusts to relieve and assist God, of whom the Apostle pronounceth their *damnation is just*, Rom. 3.8. Or

Sect. 75.

Lastly, the hypocrisy of him which keeps any one close undeposited sin upon his soul. These are each of them contrary to some part of the ground of good Conscience, to the foundation of Christian confidence, some to the *sincerity*, some to the *resolution*, and some to the *obedience*, *εν ταῖς*, in all, and some to the perseverance which is absolutely necessary to the good Conscience.

Sect. 77.

A sixth proposition is, that a supine wilfull course of negligence and sloath, whether in duties of mans particular calling, or more especially in the duties of the generall calling as we are Christians that sin of *ἀνθεῖα*, is not reconcileable with a good conscience, (Omissions being destructive, such they may be as well as commissions) whether it be omission of the performance of morall or Christian precepts, (Christs improvements of the Law in a Sermon on the Mount, being not only as Counsels but Precepts obligatory to Christians) or whether it be only the wilfull supine slothfull neglecting the means of knowledge, such as are agreeable to my course of life; Or the neglecting to make use of those means which are necessary to enable me to get out of any sin: (One act of which nature was by Christ noted and censured in his Disciples, Their *not fasting and praying to cast out that Devill that would not otherwise be cast out*.) Or the not avoiding such occasions which are apt to betray me to it; Such acts as these, are (as Christ saith to those Disciples) acts of *faulnesse and perversnesse*, Matth. 17. 17. and consequently the continued course of them contrary to the sincerity of endeavour, and so unreconcileable with a good Conscience.

Sect. 78.

The seventh proposition is, that all habituall customary obdurate sinning is unreconcileable utterly with a good Conscience. I adde the word [*Obdurate*] which signifies the hardning of the heart against the knowledge of the truth, against exhortations, against threats of Gods word, against checks of naturall Conscience,

Sect. 79.

Conscience or illuminations of grace, against resolutions and vows to the contrary, for this will make any habit certainly unreconcileable with a good Conscience ; Whereas 'tis possible that some customary sinning may be through ignorance of the duty, and that ignorance if it be not contracted by some wilfulness of mine may be matter of excuse to me, and so reconcileable with good conscience by force of the second proposition. But the obdurate holding out against Gods spirit, either knocking for admittance, but not opened to, or checking and restraining from sin after conversion, and not hearkned to, resisting all Gods methods of working on us, and still resolutely walking after the flesh, this is by no means reconcileable with a good Conscience, nay nor any habit of sin simply taken (for that is exclusive of the habit of piety necessary to the good Conscience) unless it have that authentick plea of faultlesse ignorance to excuse it.

Sett. 80.

The eighth proposition is, that any deliberate presumptuous act or commission of any sin, against which damnation, or not inheriting the Kingdome of heaven, is pronounced in the New Testament, being not immediately retracted by repentance, humiliation, and all the effects of godly sorrow, 2 Cor. 7.11. is wholly unreconcileable with good Conscience. Such are Gal. 5.19. *Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousnesse,* (four distinct degrees of incontinence) *Idolatry, witchcraft,* (two degrees of impiety) *hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murthers,* (nine degrees of the *pride of life*, or that other branch of carnality flowing from $\delta\mu\delta\sigma$, or the irascible faculty) *drunkennesse, revelling,* (the species of intemperance) and such like : and the same with some variation and addition, 1 Cor. 6.9,10. and Ephes. 5.5. Every one of these at the very commission have the nature of *peccata saudantia*, wounding the sinner to the heart, letting out a great deal of good blood and vitall spirits, and weakning the habit of Christian vertue, of *peccata clamantia*, crying sins, the voice of conscience so wronged by them, calling to Heaven for judgment against such oppressours, or perhaps Satan carrying an accusation thither against such offenders ; and if upon this they be not straight retracted by an earnest contrition, humiliation, and repentance, they then proceed farther

to be (any one act of them) *peccata vagantia conscientiam*, sins wasting and dispoiling the conscience, betraying to some sadder punishment, even desertion, and withdrawing of grace, and delivering up to our own hearts lusts, a consequent of which are all vile affections, *Rom. 1.* and that *xataze*, cursing, *Heb. 6.8.*

Just as it was the manner of the *Jewes* judicatures. He that was punisht by their *נָאָזֵן* separation or *ἀποιτύπως*, (not permitted to come near any man within four Cubits) if he did not thereupon shew and approve his repentance within the space of two moneths, on that contumacy was then smitten with their *מְרַחֵל* the anathematization or execration, and sometimes cast into prison. So is Gods dealing with the sinner remaining impenitent for such a space, substraction of Gods Grace and Spirit, the curse of the Gospel is his portion.

For the clearing of which truth yet farther, twill be observable that the danger that arises from one sin of the first magnitude, against which the sentence is pronounced, that they who are guilty of such, shall never inherit eternall life, is or may be to him that after the knowledge of the truth relapses into it as great as that which is incurred by many lesser sinnes, or by a relapsing into a generality of impure life, and therefore the remaining in that one sin, will be as unreconcileable with a regenerate estate, as the remaining in many other, and proportionably one act of it as noxious and wasting to conscience, as apt to provoke God to withdraw his Spirit; as many acts of those lesser sinnes; and though neither any single act either of lesser or greater sin in a sincere lover of Christ, presently retracted, (as it will be if he continue so) doth so grieve, as to quench Gods Spirit utterly, so provoke God, as to make him wholly withdraw his Grace and totally desert him; yet if that one sin be continued in, favoured and indulged to, either by multiplying more acts of it, or by not expressing repentance for it by all those means which the Apostle requires of his incestuous Corinthian, or which are named as effects of godly sorrow, *2 Cor. 7. 11.* this direfull punishment of desertion is then to be expected as the reward of any one such sinne, and from thence will follow an impossibility for that man so deserted ever to returne to re-

Sect. 81.

*Vid. Coch. ex.
Gen. Sanb. p.
148. & Bux-
torf. instit. Epi-
stol. p. 57.*

Sect. 82.

pentance again, Gods speciall aid, which is now withdrawn, being absolutely necessary to that.

Sect. 83.

Where yet of those, that thus remain in any such sin, there is some difference ; For some that so remain in sin, doe so remain that they desire not to get out of it, hate to be reformed ; others though ensnared so in sin that they cannot get out, yet are very earnest and sollicitous to finde out some means to break through and escape out of those snares, and then this latter state of soule though it be not sufficient to give claime or right to mercy, (the victory over the World, the actuall forsaking of all such sins being necessary to that, and not onely our wilshes that we were victorious) yet is it a nearer and more hopefull capacity of the grace of Repentance, more likely to be blessed by the returning of Gods Spirit enabling to repent, then that former state of contemptuous continuers in the same sin appears to be.

Sect. 84.

For though in both these states there is no repenting without Gods new gift of grace, and no absolute promise that God will be so gracious to such sinners, yet there is a place, *1 John 5. 16.* which makes a difference between *sinne unto death*, and *sinne not unto death* (both of them states of impenitence and persisting in sinne, but differing as the two latter degrees of *Excommunication* did among the Jewes, *Cherem* and *Schammatha*, both noting a totall separation, but the latter a finall also, and by the composition of the word intimating death or desolation, giving up the sinner to Divine vengeance, as hopeless or contumacious, in reference to which the phrase is here used, a sinne unto death, whereas the tother, of impenitence, not arrived to that desperate contumacy, is a state of curse under *Cherem* or *Anathema*, but not unto death yet) and allows this priviledge to the prayers of the faithfull men for others, that they *shall obtaine life for those that have sinned not unto death*, where that [the not being to death] of a sinne, is to be taken not from the matter of the sinne, but from the disposition of the sinner, and so from this desiring to get out, though he remain in it, or somewhat answerable to that, might, if any doubt were made of it, be proved as by other arguments, so by putting together the peculiar use of the word *ἀπαγάγειν*, in that

that Author, for abiding and continuing in sinne, and the no extenuation that such abiding is capable, of (so far as to make one such abiding so much leſſe then another such abiding, as that one should be called *τις διατάρα*, other not) save onely this of wishing and having and labouring to get out, which supposes some remainder of exciting, though not of sanctifying or assiſting grace) while the other goes on without any care, or love, or desire of Reformation.

And though ſtill there be no promise that ſuch a relapſt unreformed ſinners prayers ſhall be heard for himſelf upon that bare desire to get out, which his praying for grace will ſuppoſe, (there being no ſuch promise of grace to the relapſt perſon upon his prayer, as there is to any else) yet 'tis clear from that place of Saint John, that this privilege belongs to the prayers of other faithfull penitents for ſuch a more moderate degree of unfaithfull impenitents upon their request *God will give life to ſuch, i. e.* ſuch a degree of grace as ſhall be ſufficient to enable them to recover back to repenitance, of which being given them upon the other prayers, if they make uſe, (as infaſtibly they will if they were and continue to be really follicitous to get out of that ſtate) they ſhall undoubtedlily live eternally.

The practise of which Doctrine of Saint John thus explai ned you ſhall ſee every where in the ſtories of, or canons for the penitents, where they that for any ſinne of Ecclesiasticall cognizance were excommunicated, did return to the peace of the Church, (an image of the Peace of God) by ſeverall de grees, of which the firſt was, to ſtay and oft lye without the Church doors, and in the Porch at hours of Prayer, and deſire thoſe that retained the honour of being accounted faithfull, and ſo had liberty to go into the Church, to pray to God for them. Which as the ſecure ſupine negligent impenitent was not likely to do, ſo was he not to expect the benefit of it, nor the Christian brother obliged to pray for him, though yet by Saint John [*ιδει εκείνος λέγω, I say not of that or concerning that ſtate of ſin that he ſhall pray*] I am not convinced that it were unlawfull ſo to do.

Sect. 87.

By all this thus set and bounded with its due limitations, the truth of my eighth proposition will appear, of the unreconcileableness of such presumptuous acts of such branded sins un-retracted, with a regenerate estate or good conscience, as being indeed quite contrary to every part and branch of the premised ground of a good Conscience.

Sect. 88.

To which all that I shall adde is onely this, that he that tenders but the comforts of this life, *i. e.* of a good Conscience, will be sure never to commit deliberately and presumptuously, or having by surreption fallen, never to lye down or continue one minute unhumbled unreformed in any such sinne, on which that direfull fate is by Christ or his Apostles inscribed [shall not inherit the Kingdome of Heaven :] where yet as I shall not affirme that none shall subject us to that danger but those which are there specified, (for there is added [and such like,] and other sins there may be committed with the like deliberation and presumption, and so as contrary to Conscience) so shall I not say that all that commit any one act of any of these without that deliberation and presumption, or that are presently by their own heart smitten and brought to repentance for them, shall incurre that danger ; for the words *τεχαρούσις* and *τοίχυσις*, the doers and committers of them, signifie the deliberate committing and indulgent yielding to them, contrary to which the excuse of surreption at the time and the instant subsequent retractation of them (by contrition, confession, forsaking, and re-inforcement of greater care and vigilance for the future) will be sure means to deliver from that danger.

Sect. 89.

Whereto yet this caution must be annext which may passe for

Sect. 90.

A ninth Proposition. That the frequency or repetition of any such acts after such contrition and resolution is an argument of the unsincerity of that contrition, of the deceiveableness of that pretended greater care, and so a symptome of an ill Conscience, as the spreading of the skall or leprosie after the Priests inspection is sufficient to pronounce the patient unclean, *Levit. 13.* and as that disease in the relapse may be mortall which at first was not.

Sect. 91.

Other more particular niceties I confess there are, the distinguishing

stingushing of which might be usefull for some mens states, and help to disabuse them both out of an erroneous and a secure, yea and an overtrembling Conscience. But because that which would be thus proper to one, being layed down in common, or cast into the Lottery, might have the ill hap to be drawn by him to whom it is not proper, (as that Physick which would purge out a distemper from one, will breed a weaknesse in another) and because no wise man ever thought fit to take Lawes out of generalities, I shall resolve rather to obey such reasons, and to be directed by such examples, not to descend to particulars, then to be in danger first of tempting the Readers patience, then of interrupting his Peace.

*Pray for us, for we trust we have a good Conscience, in all things
willing to live honestly. Heb. 13.18.*

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OF

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2020-07-01 10:00:00

OF SCANDALL.

Προφῆται δύο ή τρεῖς λαλεῖτωσαν, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακειμέντωσαν.

BY
HENRY HAMMOND, D.D.



London,
Printed by J. G. for R. Royston, at
the Angel in Ivie-lane. 1650.

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OF SCANDALL.

HE that would know the true proper full importance of the word *Scandall* or *Offence*, or to be *Offended* or *Scandalized* (as they are taken for the same) need not seek into many authours for it. The new Testament, and the Apocryphal books, and the Greek translation of the old

Sect. 1.

Testament, are the prime authours that have used these words, and all other latter Christian writers may justly be thought to have had them from that Fountain; ancient prophane writers not affording them. From hence 'twill be sure just to infer, that in as many senses as the scripture Canonicall and Apocryphall hath used the words, in so many they may be justly used, and in no more. Now the uses of the word *Scandall* among them are either naturall, (as generally in the old Testament) or borrowed, *i. e.* metaphoricall, (as chiefly in the new.) It naturally signifies three things. 1. A Trap, a Gin, or Snare to catch any thing: So in the Greek translation of *Psal. 69.22.* the word is *υπόθηκα*, (being joyn'd with two other words which signifie *snare* and *gin*) and in our new translation is rendred a *trap*: wherefore in the place of *Rom. 11. 9.* where the same words are cited out of the Septuaginta's translation, and not out of the Hebrew text of the Psalm, I should conceive it should be rendred by analogy, not *stumbling blocks*, but *gin*, or some other word belonging to this first signification: In this sense it is used, 1 *Mat. 5. 4.* where it is all one with *snare*, and it is farther interpreted by (*laying Wait by the way*) to

Sect. 2.

standard axay.

Sect. 3.

*πάγιλης καὶ
σκέπα.*

catch them treacherously. So again, *Wisd.* 14. 11. the word is used, and explained by another word, signifying a *trap*, or *snare*, the very same that was used in the Psalms, and to the Romanes.

Sect. 4.

2. It signifies any *Obstacle* or *hindrance* laid in a mans way, by which the passenger is detain'd or stopt, peculiarly a *sharp Stake*, such as in time of warre mere were wont to put in the fields where their enemy should follow, to wound their feet or legs in their passage: against which being so ordinary in war, they anciently used greaves of brasse to defend their feet or legs, *1 Sam. 17. 6.* to which you may refer that Epithet so frequent in *Homeric*, πυρημίδες, and χαλκονυμίδες. *Aχαιοι*, to signifie those graves brasen or otherwise, that the *Grecians* used; described by that Poet, *1a.* Φ by κυνημίς ρεοτευκτε καννήρειο, made of tin, and covering the whole legge to the knee, of so firm a substance that it made a loud noise at the stroak of the weapon on it, σμερδαλέον κονδύνος faith he. Thus is the word σκάρδαλον used, *Judith 5. 1.* where we render it *impediments*, a word somewhat too general to signifie those sharp stakes or other instruments to wound or gall the passengers, which are known to every body: for which I believe we have some proper English word, I think it is a *gall-trap*.

Sect. 5.

3. The word signifies a *stone* or *block* in the way, at which men are apt (if they be not carefull, or if they goe in the dark) to stumble and fall: and thereupon in the old Testament it is taken for a *fall*: and so sometimes for *sin*, the *fall of the soul*, as *Judith 12. 2.* (where these words [*lest it be an offence*] would more clearly be rendred out of the Greek, *lest it become an offence*, i. a *sinne* or *pollution*, as you may see in the same matter which is there treated of, *Dan. 1. 8. Tob. 1. 11. and 1 Sam. 25. 31.*) and sometimes for *ruine* or *destruction*, the fall of the whole person, which we are brought to by *sin*, as *Judith 5. 20.* our English renders it *ruine*, and *Psal. 49. 13.* where though we read *folly*, the *Sepuagint* read *Scandal*, by that rendring an Hebrew word which signifies both *folly* and *ruine*. I confess this last a cception of the word for *ruine*, is somewhat rare, (yet authoriz'd by our English in the place of *Judith*) and therefore if any dislike it, I shall not stand much upon it; because in both those places last mentioned it may well enough signific *sin*, as that is a *snare* or *stumbling block* an *occasion* of *ruine*, or *falling*, or *destruction*; in

in which sense I conceive 'tis used, *Judg. 8. 27.* where 'tis rendred a *snare*, i. e. a *sin ensnaring or occasioning ruine*.

Beside these three significations, in which the word in Greek retained in our Language, is read in the old Testament, I am confident there is no other, save once, *Psal. 50. 20.* for *flander*, or *calumny*, or *defamation*, (for so the Hebrew there signifies) a sense which vulgar amongst us in English; by a *Scandall* meaning a flander: but that sense being but once met with in the whole Bible, or twice at most, (*Ecol. 27. 23.* where yet I conceive the translation might be mended) will not deserve to be taken into consideration.

Sect. 6.

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Now for the use of the word in the new Testament: 'tis first observable, that the best nomenclature for hard words in that is the observing the use of them in the Greek of the old, for the writers of the new Testament being Jews, not Greeks, wrote in an idiom proper and peculiar to them only, and those other Jews that wrote also in Greek, somewhat differing from that of the Attick, or naturall Greek writers. And therefore we may well resolve, that the uses of the word, which we have there found and already observed, will be very instrumentall to the understanding of the same word, and others derived from it in the new Testament. And so much the rather because, as I said, no prophane Greek writer before the Scripture, is known to have used it; only *Aristophanes* once a word neare it. This being premised, 'twill be worth our pains (at least by so doing we shall put the whole matter beyond exception) to survey briefly all the places in the new Testament, where the word is used.

Sect. 7.

οναρδανη-
σεισις.

To that end I shall begin with the first in my Concordance, which is *Matth. 13. 41.* the *Angels shall gather out all Scandals*; 'tis in a sense borrowed from the second mentioned signification of a *sharp stake*, which he who hath once met with and been gall'd by it, is wont to gather up and cast into the fire, as there it follows the Angels for our sakes should doe, *v. 24.* (to which Saint *Paul* also seems to allude, *2 Cor. 11. 29.* in pitting *Scandalizing* and *burning together*) & denotes simply whatsoever may wound or gall us in our Christian course, and by that means fore-slow our pace, cause us to slacken or give over, or lye down in the service of Christ; so *Matth. 17. 27.* Christ pays tribute, that he may not offend the *Jews*, i. e. that they might not think him

Sect. 8.

a Contemner of the Temple, to which the tribute was due, and so forsake and not believe in him, that he might not discourage them from following him. So *Math. 15. 12.* the Pharisees hearing a doctrine that gall'd them particularly, were offended and forsook him; that doctrine drove them away from following him. So againe (*Mat. 18. 7.*) it must needes bee that offences come, which seemes to refer to *false doctrines and heresies*, if you compare that verse with *1 Cor. 11. 19.* there must be *Heresies*, (and *Rom. 16. 17.* where offences are said to be *contrary to the Apostles Doctrine*, and that they must be avoided, as the *Heretick* must, *Tit. 3.10.*) the venting of which all things of most *binders others* in their *Christian course*, but whether it be meant peculiarly of *Heresies*, or exemplary sins, it matters not. To which soever you apply it, another place, *Luke 17. 1.* will belong unto it also, being the place directly parallel to it. So *Mat. 18. 6.* *He that shall offend one of these little ones, i. e. he that shall occasion their falling off into any sin; or, which the place especially imports, by contemning them, discourage them from the study of piety.* For so on the contrary side to *receive them, v.5.* is by *Saint Mark 9. 41.* exprest to consist in doing them kindnesse, *to encourage them in the wayes of godlinesse.* So Christ crucified is said a *Scandal* to the *Jewes, i. e. they that were otherwise not ill opinion'd of him, and so followed him with the multitudes, when they saw him crucified, were quite discourag'd, and fell away from him, (as they that are so gall'd by those stakes are fain to give over the pursuit, to return) and so resolv'd, seeing him die, that he was not the *Messias* whom they expected, a glorious temporall deliverer.* To which belongs that notable place, *Mat. 11. 6. Luke 7. 23.* *Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me, i. e. shall not be gall'd and discourag'd, and so fall off by seeing the sufferings that befall me, and await my disciples or followers.* So againe, *Mat. 13. 57. Mark 6. 3.* It is said, that the consideration of his known and mean birth occasioned their being offended in him, *i. e. their deserting and not believing of him, when the miracles which he had done inclin'd them somewhat to a valuing of him.* So *John 6. 61.* when Christ talkes of *eating the flesh of the Son of man, they were offended, (that is) that speech carnally understood (either that Christ was to die, (which the eating his flesh*

So in Polycarp's Epist. to the Philipp. p. 20. where *ἀπεχθεντος σὺ σκανδαλών* is joyned with *ἡ τῶν Ἰουδαίων κατακείσθεντων τὸ οὐρανοῦ τὸ κυνέοντας οὐτινες θο-πλανῶσι, &c.*

flesh presupposed, and they did not like to hear of ; dreaming of a temporall glorious *Messias*) or that they were to turne *Canniballs and eat mans flesh*,) discourag'd them from following him, at least from taking him for the *Messias*. So *Gal. 5.11.* persecution is ealled the *Scandal of the Crosse*, or that upon which so many are discourag'd from professing the crucified Saviour, according to that in the parable of the sower, *Matth. 13. 21. Mark 4. 17.* upon the comming of persecution presently he is offended, i. e. gall'd and falls off, and *Mat. 24. 10.* on the same occasion, and in the same sense. So *Matth. 26. 31. Mark 14. 27.* this night (to wit, of my attachment) *ye shall all be offended because of me*, i. e. fall back, forsake me : and so in *S. Peters answere, v. 23.* Although all men should be offended, yet will I never be offended : upon which, that which Christ rejoyns (before the *Cocke crow*, i. e. before morning, or day-break, all one with this night, v. 31. then shalt deny me thrice) is an interpretation of the word offended, and shews, that to be offended is to deny Christ. And so *Job. 16. 1.* These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended ; where Christ foretels the persecutions that should befall them, that they might be forewarn'd too, and not fall off, when they befall them.

These are the chief, if not all the places to which the 2d old Testament acceptation of the word *Scandal* in a Metaphoricall borrowed sense belongs & of all of them and each, you may observe,

1. That *Scandal* signifies either some sin, the occasion of farther sin in others ; or else somwhat else, which though it be not sin, yet occasions sin in others, though very indirectly sometimes as the Crosse of Christ : and whether in one or other, the rule will be, that he that is offended or *Scandaliz'd*, doth directly commit some sin, and that, for most of the places, the sin of infidelity or forsaking, or denying Christ.

Sect. 9.

2. That the being *Scandaliz'd*, falling off from Christ, (or the effect which followes that occasion) hath no reflection or influence (in any of the places) on that which was the occasion ; so as to make it sinfull or avoydable, if it were not so before (as will appear to any that will survey the places) and consequently that another being *Scandaliz'd* is not sufficient to lay a charge on him whose action (otherwise not chargeable or criminous) was the occasion of his being *scandaliz'd*. Let the Crosse of

Sect. 10.

Christ, with which so many were in this sense scandaliz'd, suffice for a proof of this.

Sect. 12.

Other places there are which must be interpreted by bringing the Metaphor from the first of the 3 senses, as it signifies a *snare* or *gin* to catch one in. So *Mat. 16.23. Thou art an offence unto me*, i. e. by expressing thy detestation against my sufferings, thou labourest to bring me into an horror and fear of suffering, and so in effect temptest me to sin; where you must mark, that though *Peter were an offence to Christ, that is, tempted him, laboured to ensnare him, yet Christ was not Scandaliz'd, offended, ensnared, or overcome by the temptation*. In the same sense is that, *Rev. 2.14. of Balaam who taught Balaak בָּלָאָק σκάρδαλον*, we render it to *cast a stumbling block*; but sure it is most clearly, *to lay a snare before the Children of Israel, to intice them by their Daughters to Idolatry, and by Idolatry to intrap and destroy them*.

Sect. 13.

Lud. de Deu
מכסות
נזהר
from

Scandall is so perfectly all one with Temptation, that, as a learned man hath observed, the Ethiopick interpreter of the new Testament, instead of Scandall puts a word that signifies *Temptation*, and the same that in the Lords prayer is put for *Temptation*: in this sense is that of the *eye and the foot offending us, Mat. 5.29. 18.8. Mark 9.47. i.e. when a mans eye, or any other member of his body proves a snare to him, an in-let to temptations, a means of bringing him to any sin*.

Sect. 14.

And of those places you may observe again, 1. That no man is said to be offended, but he that commits the sinne to which he is tempted, and therefore Christ is not said to be offended, that is, really to be wrought upon by that Scandall: but as Satan tempted him, *Mat. 4. yet he yielded not, but overcame the tempter: So here he uses that other Satan: for to have been offended in this sense had been all one with being overcome by a temptation*.

Sect. 15.

2. That the Agent, or he that is said to lay the snare or to offend, finneth also (as in all the places it will *de facto* appear that they did) though no body be taken in it, as he that tempteth to evil commits a sin, though his temptation prove not effectuall. The setting of a snare being a positive act, a note of a treacherous designe, though it doe not succeed. And therefore in *Machab. 1. 36. the laying of snares for to intrap the Israelites, or bring them*

them from observing the Law, is call'd there by the devils name, *an evill Adversary*, or as the Greek hath it, *a devill to Israel*.

Σιδέβολον τὸ
Ἴτεράν.

A Third and last sort of places there are that refer to the third mention'd acceptation of the word, as it signifies a *stumbling block*, so when the word *stone* is joyned with it, or the Greek word that signifies *stumbling*, so Rom. 9. 33. Christ is called a *stumbling block*, a *Rock of offence*, i. e. an occasion of fall, or sin in many, and consequently of increasing their condemnation, as he saith, *if he had not come, &c. they had not had sinne*, i. e. had not been so great sinners, had not been guilty of the great sin of unbelief and crucifying of Christ: and therefore Simeon prophecies of Christ, that he would be for the *fall of many in Israel*; many sins his comming should be the occasion of. Rom. 14. 13. *That no man lay a stumbling block, or scandal*, (which we render an *occasion of falling*) in his *brothers way*; that is, do or practise any thing, that may bring another that comes after him upon his nose, or to commit any sin. So 1 Pet. 2.8. *Christ is called a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence*, at which to stumble is to be *disobedient to Christ*. So Rom. 14. 21. *stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*, i. e. by following thee, doth fall, commits some sin, doth some act unlawfull for him, (though simply it were not for thee; it being against his Conscience, though not against thine) and so by *falling* bruises and weakens himself, makes himself lesse able for Gods service, then he was: for so every sin against Conscience being a *grieving the Spirit*, is consequently the spirituall weakening of the man, or if you will, (as in Saint James adverēv signifies, c. 5. 14.) the wound or disease of the soul. So againe 1 Cor. 8.9. *stumbling block to the weak*, and v. 13. where the case is clearly the same that we last mentioned; that if any man by doing any indifferent thing (which he in conscience is inform'd to be perfectly lawfull for him to do) shall occasion another mans sin by doing that after him which he is not resolv'd to be lawfull; that man offends against that charity due to his brother, and therefore must think fit to deny himself the use of that liberty which Christ hath given him. To this may belong that other place, 1 Job. 2. 10. where that phrase (*there is no Scandal in him*) seems to signify, fals not into those sins that ignorant men or uncharitable (who are said in the Antithesis, v. 11. to walk in the dark) are

Σεκτ. 16.

πέτρα σκανδάλου.
σάλος. περιστομα.

are subject unto. One place more there is belonging to this purpose, where though the word *Scandal* be not used in the Text, yet $\pi\gamma\sigma\sigma\kappa\omega\pi\eta$, offence, is used, and that I confess to be all one, and it is 2 Cor. 6. 3. giving no offence in any thing; where yet offence is interpreted by Beza, *Quipiam ad quod possint impingere, any thing that others may stumble at, or be alien'd from the Gospell by*; as if we fail in any Christian duty (mentioned v. 4, 5, 6.) they that see us would be apt to doe: and so that which follows imports also (that the ministry be not blamed) that is, that our actions be not justly reprehended or found fault with, *but in all things approving our selves, &c.*

Sect. 17.

And of this third sort of places 'tis observable againe: 1. That he that is offended sins himself, stumbles, and fails, and bruises himself; and 2. that he that is the occasion of his fall doth not always sin (for Christ, and grace, and that which should have been for their wealth, proves to many an occasion of falling) but yet sometimes he doth; as if he purposely in a matter indifferent, when he might have chosen, doth any thing which another whose Conscience is doubtful, doth after him and so sins; nay if he do not abstain from that indifferent action, when he sees that consequent likely to follow; nay if he be not carefull to observe, whether the consequent be likely to follow, and if so, to abstain. This third sort of *Scandal* you see is applyed peculiarly to one kind of actions, those by the doing of which another comming after, and doing the same, fails into sin, as when either the *example* was sinfull, or being indifferent in it self is against the other mans conscience, and so being imitated by him, is in him a sin against conscience, and not indifferent. And then

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Another sort of actions there are which may though not so directly, yet not improperly be referr'd to this head, as when I do any thing in its self not *unlawful*, yet very apt to be mistaken by other men, for somewhat else which is *unlawfull*; and see it strongly probable, that those which will be apt so to mistake, will be as apt also by occasion of this action of mine, to commit that other sin which they conceive me to have committed, or to confirme and harden themselves in that sinne through that mistaken example of mine; which they might otherwise probably have reformed, if they had not received encouragement by this

this action of mine : And if question be made , what is to be thought of this ; I answer that although I am not sure that that place of Scripture in our English Bibles which commands [to abstain from all appearance of evill,] doth come home to this purpose, (because *σαντικαὶ εἰδοῦς* which we render [from all appearance] may bear any sense, and signify no more then from every kinde or sort of evill, for so both the Greek *ἌΙΩΝΙ*, and Latin *species* import ; and withall , appearance of evill is so uncertain , and inconstant a thing , that to abstain from it *univerſim* cannot be matter of any *possible* command. And again , though I dare not from that other precept of *σάντια εὐηγγελία*, *whatsoever is of good report*, *Phil. 4. 8.* conclude it unlawfull to do any thing which hath the ill luck to be of *ill report*, i. e. to be mistaken for a sinne (because 1. there is no prohibition in that place interdicting the doing of every thing which is of *ill report*. 2. No analogy of other Christian rules to infer such prohibition , it being rather the fate of all Christian vertues to be evill spoken of, and the *receiving the praise of men* , being branded by Christ as unreconcileable with *believing*. 3. Because some actions of Christ were of *ill report* , particularly that of *eating and drinking with Publicans and sinners*, (which rendred him suspected for a *glutton*) and that of *casting out of Devils* (which was defamed for *Sorcery* or *compact with Beelzebub*.) 4. Because that which is of *ill report* with one, may be of *good report* with a thousand others ; and there the judgement of that one will not be considerable against those thousand to defame an innocent laudable action) yet still I conceive that the great obligation to *φιλανθρωπία* and *φιλοτυχία*, *loving of all men*, and *desiring the good of their soules*, which lyes upon all Christians (by force of Christ's example, and *legacy*, *land precept of charity*) will extend so far , as to have the force of precept, that every man abstain from such *purely indifferent actions* (being so in themselves , and then by the Magistrate *uncommanded*) which he foresees will be thus mistaken for unlawfull by those who are likely to be moved by his example to commit those sins which they conceive him to have committed ; this being an inseparable attendant of my *charity* to my brothers *soule*, to use all lawfull means which my conscience tells me will be to his gholtly health or preservation.

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Mean while some difference may be observed in things indifferent, some being *commendable*, though not *commanded*; of use, though not of *necessity*; and such as *extra causam scandali* I should on pious considerations be moved to chuse, or practice: and in this case, if it be demanded, whether that sole fear of *scandal*, ought to restrain me from that which all other motives rather incline me to, and so make me abstain; or whether I should rather claim the priviledge of my Christian liberty, and that make me not to abstain. I answer that a *middle* course may yet be better, then either extream crudely taken: that is, that I ought to do my best to free this laudable indifferent action of mine from the evill colour that it is capable of, by *rectifying* his judgement whom I discern to be mistaken in it, and by declaring (either exprely, or by some significative character of my intentions fastened to my action) the clearnesse and innocency of my purposes to any other that may be so mistaken; and by so doing if I cannot free my self from his *uncharitable censure*, yet I shall be sute to keep him from any danger of *following me* to that sin; for sure my very disclaiming of that sin which he suspects me guilty of, will devest that sin of all authority which it may receive from my committing it, and not *invite*, but rather deter and *fortifie* others from falling into that sin, which they see disavowēd and disliked by me. For if my *authority* be of any force with them, it will perswade them to abstain from that which I disclaime, and professe my self to hate, (who certainly know my own minde best) rather then to do, what they onely conceive I do, but I professe I do not. And therefore the case being thus set of the commendable usefull indifferent, not of the meer frivolous unconsiderable, when the use and gain of my action to me is *certaine*, and the danger of being mistaken by others at most *but possible*, and that also preventable by these other means, neither piety nor prudence will advise to abstain from that healthfull food, which if it be by accident unhealthfull to others, hath yet an antidote admindred with it. Which will be yet farther heightned also, if this laudable indifferent fall out to be such as the *examples of holy men in Scripture*, or the *praise* of the *Church* in purer times have given countenance to, especially if the *perpetual current of antiquity* have commended it

it to us : for certainly these will be of great authority with all prudent pious men ; and the more *early* and catholick that practice, the greater that authority.

Tis true, very strict rules in many particulars the Judaicall law of the Old Testament did prescribe, forbidding many indifferent things, on this only ground, because the using them might seem a *compliance* with the heathen customes of Idolaters. Such was that prohibition, *Exod. 34. 26.* *I*thou shalt not seeth a Kid in the mothers milk, in the sacrifice of the in-gathering ; given no doubt in opposition to the *Gentile* practice of those which at the time of gathering in their fruits, solemnly used this custome of *seething a Kid in the dammes milk*, and then in a *Magicall* way, sprinkled their trees, and fields, and Gardens with it to make them fructifie the next year, as *Abrauenel* and others out of Jewish writers have observed. Such was also the prohibition, *Levit. 19. 27.* against *rounding the corners of their heads*, in reference to the *καρτόχαλα κειρεται*, or, *κειξυεν τες κερτάρες*, the round cut used by the *Arabians*, saith *Herodotus*, and thereupon forbidden the Jewes, and a woe pronounced, *Jer. 9. 26.* *διπά τάντα μεκενεράδηρον, &c.* on every one that was so cut round, *Si adjuverit tonsorem*, saith *Maimonides*, if he directed, or willingly permitted the Barber to put him into that heathenish guise : And many others in the Old Testament of the nature, and the following Rabbins have added many more directions, if not precepts of the same nature. That one book of *Maimonides* concerning Idolatry will furnish the Reader with store of examples : but some such as do not so well become the gravity of that author ; as that, *If the Jew hath a Thorne in his foot, when he is near an Idoll, he must not stoop to take it out.* *If a tree hath been worshipt, or an Idoll set in it, it is not lawfull to sit in the shade of the trunk or body of that tree, though of the boughes or leaves it be lawfull ; if there be any other way, it is not lawfull to passe under it ; if none, then he must run by it.* *Dionysius Vossius* in his notes on that Author hath added some parallel passages out of other Jewish Writers, as that of *R. Menasse*, who being shewed an Idoll, did in contempt cast stones at it ; *which action of his, because the Image was the image of Mercury, (*who was wont to be worshipt by the Heathens after that manner, by throwing stones at it, or scattering stones be-

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Thal. c. 8.

De Idol. c. 12.

c. 3.

c. 7.

fore him ; to which custome or ceremony the *Mercuriall Statutes* refer, saith *Pbormutus* *acè Brv*) was therefore noted , accused, brought before the Judge, and by him pronounced to be *unlawfull*, because it was the *proper worship* of that Idoll, though used in despight, not civility by that man. So again , if there be but one way to an *idolatrous City*, it is *unlawfull to go that way* , *Aboda Zarac*. 1. §. 4. and so, saith he, the Hebrews in *Rabbott* mention a tradition, that the reason why *Mordochai* would not *bow to Haman* was because there was *Woven in his garment the image of a false God*.

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Some instances also might perhaps be brought out of the *practice* of the ancient *Christian Church* (mentioned by *Tertullian de Cor. mil.*) to this purpose of abstaining from things *indifferent*, for *fear* of any appearing *compliance* with the *Heathens*. Of which yet it must be observed, 1. That this was in things of no manner of *spirituall use or profit*, neither commendable, nor advantageous, in things of ancient *Christian prescription*, or practice of purer times. 2. That it was in matters of such a *quality*, as that *compliance* would have seem'd a *dissembling* or *renouncing* of the *Christian faith*, (and not of imitating of former *purer Christians*) and so contrary to that great *Christian duty* of *confessing Christ before men*, which they could not be said to do, who when that *confession* was *persecuted*, did thus comply with or not *professe* open dislike of the actions of those *persecutors*. And so those instances will not be so proper to the matter of *Scandal*, as to that other head of *Christian duty*, the *necessity* of *confessing Christ before men*, (those especially who are the greatest oppugners of him, to which matter also those other *Judaicall instances* do belong) unlesse that non-*confessing* of Christ, may by the example scandalize also. 3. That the same men thought it not amisse, or *unlawfull* at other times to comply with other as great enemies of *Christianity*, as the *Gentiles*, namely with the *Jewes* in observation of some of their out-dated ceremonies, nay thought themselves obliged so to do, when in prudence they conceived it more likely to *gaine* those *enemies* by that means, then to *confirme* them in their dislikes of *Christianity*, or drive others to those dislikes. 4. That even with the *Heathen* themselves they could in other things think fit to comply also, when

when prudence dictated that compliance as more instrumentall to Christian policy ; and from these premises, 5. That this whole matter is to be referred to the Christian pious discretion or prudence, it being free to him either to abstain or not to abstain from any indifferent action (remaining such) according as that piety and that prudence shall represent it to be most charitable and beneficiall to other mens souls ; and he that shall not thus regulate his actions by what he is *convinced* will be thus most conduced to that grand Christian end, the *saving*, or not destroying, or not suffering sin upon his brother, shall not by me be excused from the guilt and blame of having *scandaliz'd* his brother in this last New Testament sense, at least in some other which is not far distant from it ; though after all this it must be observed, that he which thus is betrayed to, or confirmed in any sin by conceiving me to have committed it, when I have not, / this easie prostitute seducible sinner, who will thus sin upon any, upon no occasion) is not S. Pauls weak, i. e. doubtfull-conscienc'd Christian of whom he takes such care, that he should not be scandaliz'd.

For such is he only, that for want of knowledge of his just Sect. 22. Christian liberty, thinks it unlawfull to do those things, which being indifferent in themselves, are only unlawfull to him, which believes them so, or is not satisfied that they are lawfull ; This weaknesse in faith, (a kinde of disease of the minde, and so in the New Testament phrase *ἀσθετία*) being only want of knowledge, or of orthodox instruction, as will appear by comparing *Rom. 14.* with *1. Cor. 8.* where the *ἀσθετία τῆς τισης* in one, is all one with their *ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τὸ γνῶσις* in the other, *Weaknesse in faith, with want of knowledge.*

The only matter of question or difficulty behind in this particular will be, why those who are in such Judaicall errors are sometimes appointed by S. Paul to be so tenderly handled, not to be vilified or set at naught, *Rom. 14. 3.* but car. taken that they be not *scandaliz'd*, in the end of that chapter, and *1 Cor. 8.* And yet in the Epistle to the *Galatians*, they are by the Apostle reviled [*O foolish, &c.*] c. 3. 1. and chid and reproached out of their Judaicall performances, and no care taken of not *scandalizing* them. The answering of this will require us to consider the different

rent estate of those *Galatians* from those *Romans*. The *Galatians* had been formerly *Gentiles*, and (though as it seems not improbable from *Gal. 4. 9.* formerly converted to *Judaisme*, yet) by Saint *Paul* throughly converted from thence and baptized into Christianity, as that is opposite both to *Judaisme* and *Gentilisme* also; i.e. fully instructed by him in the nature of *Christian Doctrine* and *liberty*, and had given up their hearts as well as names unto it, only after they had been begotten by *S. Paul in the Gospell*, had begun in the spirit, *Gal. 3. 3.* had come to an absolute abrenuntiation of all their former Jewish persuasions, and to some good progresse in Christianity, some false *Judaizing teachers* began to corrupt and poyson them, *Gal. 3. 1. & 5. 7.* and to bring them back again to that *joke*, that they had been taught to cast off; and these *tares* the Apostle could hope by reprehensions and sharpnesse to root out without endangering the *wheat*, and therefore sets severely and heartily to it, thinks not fit either in *civility* or *charity* to use any compliances, or condescendings, or softer medicines, (knowing their errours to be contrary to the doctrine to which they had been baptized, and consequently that they might in reason give place unto it, and there was no fear that the rooting out of these would root out Christianity with them, as it might probably do, if they had been sowed or planted together) but employes all his vehemence and bowels of kindnes toward them, in conjuring out that evill spirit that had so lately got possession of them, (and doubts not but Christianity that was earlier planted in them, and that by him who had begotten them in the Gospell, and so had a paternall authority with them) then these vain legall dreams, that some false Teachers had lately instilled into them, might be able to survive them also. And in this case being to deale with adversaries and false Teachers, not with *weaklings* but *corrupters*, had the Apostle used any *compliance*, had he *circumcised Titus*, *Gal. 2. 3.* (as at another time he did *Timothy*) had he then given place but for an hour, v. 5. suspended the use of his liberty then, when liberty was decryed, this had been *scandalous* in the Apostle, this had probably been the confirming of the erroneous, the encouraging of the adversary, the misleading of the doubtfull, shaking the faithfull, and disturbing what he had before settled among them.

Whereas

Whereas on the other side the Romans at their first conversion to Christianity had not all of them been taught to put off the opinion of the necessity of legall abstinences τὴν τὸν νόμον κατέχοντος συνειδήσεως οὐ μηδὲ πίστιν, saith St. Chrysostome in proem. ad ep. ad Rom. but continued their obligation to the Law after receiving of the faith, being some of them (as may appear by the matter of St. Pauls discourse to them, in the former part especially of that Epistle) naturall Jewes, dispersed thither, who could not be easily brought to assent to such Doctrine, but would probably have refused to embrace Christianity, if it had been offered them on such hard conditions, some others of them (who were Gentiles by birth) being perhaps Proselytes to Moses and Christ together, partakers of the infelicity of those who are mentioned, *Acts 15.5.* that by the Doctrine of the *Pharisee Christians* (or believers of the sect of the Pharisees) had at their entrance on the faith, a necessity of receiving *Judaisme* also prest upon them. This St. Paul testifies clearely of St. Peter, *Gal. 2. 14.* that he constrained the Gentiles to *Judaize*, to receive the *Mosaical* as well as Christian Law, and himselfe durst not converse or eat with the Gentiles whilst any Jewish Christians were by, ver. 12. by which whether Doctrine or compliance of St. Peter, it was no strange thing if it came to passe, that those which were by him converted to the faith, (as *Eusebius* and other Ecclesiastick Historians agree that the Romans were, *v.i. Ec. hist. l. 2. c. 14. & 15.*) although they were Christians in the positive part, acknowledging so much as was answerable to the now-Articles of the *Creed*, &c. yet being not so in the negative, concerning the evacuating of the Judaicall Law (but rather perswaded of the contrary) could no more eat *Swines flesh*, then a meer Jew could doe; and therefore 'tis St. Chrysostome's opinion that these being so wedded to those Judaicall observances, rather then they would eat forbidden flesh, would *in universum* eat no flesh at all, οὐτε μὴ γίνεσθαι εὐφάρεγτος, οὐχ οἰστιν ἀπεκαθόντως μόνων, πάντων ἐξης ἀπέκχοντο οὐκ οἰστον, and so came to eate nothing but *Herbs*, *Rom. 14. 2.*

Of these therefore that were thus *weak in faith*, ver. 1. that is either *infirm*, feeble, uninstructed Christians, babes not men; or else, (as the Fathers enlarge the sense, and as *weaknesse adireta*, mostly

mostly imports in the new Testament) sick and diseased in mind, brought up in this Judaicali error, the Apostle, Ro. 14. gives these directions. 1. That the stronger, healthfuller, i. e. more knowing and more Orthodox Christians should περσλαμβάνεσθαι (the vulgar read *assumere*) take them to them ; first, friendly to afford them communion, and not separate from them for this error ; 2ly labour to cure their malady, get them out of their error, and not leave them in the pride and folly of their own hearts, to judge and censure those who have done nothing amiss, but rather desire their good (which St. Chrysostome understands by περσλαμβάνεσθαι μὴ εἰς δικαιοστις διαλογισμῶν, and so St. Jerome also, intending it thus, *Nolite secundum vestras cogitationes, quia lex non iudicat, iudicare, aliis enim credit, &c.* and from that verse observes, that though the Apostle exhorts the strong, yet he covertly reprehends, and on their backs as it were whips, the weak or erroneous Judaizers ; first, in saying they are sick ; secondly, in bidding περσλαμβάνεσθαι αὐτὸς, which is an evidence, saith he, ἐξάτης ἀπόστολος ; that they are in every ill case ; and thirdly, in mentioning δικαιοστις which notes (saith he) that they judge and censure those that least deserve it, and that are willing to communicate with them, and labour the curing of them ; and indeed that these weak ones did so judge the strong, is plain, v.3. where the exhortation is distinct, *let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth.*) 2. That the knowing again should not *vitify* or set at naught the weaker [μὴ ἐξαδειρώ, v.3.] not call him *Racha*, empty sensesse fellow, not reproach or scoff at his scrupulous conscience, but in charity suppose it to proceed from want of knowledge onely, and consequently to have the excuse and benefit of that Gospel antidote, *weaknesse* or ignorance to plead for it. 3. That the stronger Christians (which although they have liberty, yet are not obliged alway to make use of it) abstain from those lawfull enjoyments which those weak ones, which count them unlawfull, may yet by their example be embolden'd against Conscience to venture on.

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But then on the other side, the weak or sick erroneous Christian, that cannot with a good Conscience use that liberty himself, is commanded, *I μὴ κείνειν* that he doe not judge or censure the strong, upon two reasons : 1. because ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν περσλαμβάνει, ver.3.

v.3. God hath by calling him to the faith, assumed or received the strong (as that strong had been exhorted to doe the weak, v. 1.) *εἰς φίλας* to friendship or communion first, (as *περοταυταράντης* is used *Philem. 12.*) then to help and cure him of his former defect or disease, and bring him to perfect health and growth in Christianity; and *stands and falls to his owne Master* v. 4. 2ly. That he be sure never to doe any thing against Conscience, or which he is not fully perswaded in mind, that it is lawfull for him.

Having thus seen the state of those Romans, it will be superfluous to add much about the *Corinthians* in the almost parallel place *1 Cor. 8.* This only difference will be worth noting between them, that (as there were two sorts of *proselytes* among the Jews, one of *justice*, or of those that undertook the observation of the whole Judaicall law; the other of the *Gates*, those that received onely the precepts of the sons of *Noah*, of which the abstaining from things offered to Idols was one, and as when the difference was betwixt the *brethren*, *Act. 15.* whether the *Gentile converts* should be *circumcised* v. 1. i. e. be admitted *proselytes of justice*, or only receive the 7 precepts of *Noah*, *abstaine from things offered to Idols, &c.* v. 19. it was determin'd in the Councell of the Apostles, that it shalld suffice, if they were *proselytes of the Gates*, and therefore they tell them that if they thus be entred, *abstaine from things offered to Idols, &c.* they *shall do well, so*) the Romans being either Jews, or under the first head of *Jewish proselytes*, in *St Chrysostomes* opinion, and so thinking themselves bound to all legall Mosaicall abstinencies, the *Corinthians* were onely under the second, and so by their principles, which they had received of those, who converted, baptized, and *begot them in the faith*; (and that according to the result of that *Apostolick consultation* *Act. 15.*) did continue to think it unlawfull to eat any thing offered to Idols, or that came from an Idol feast (which yet by the way *S. Paul* resolves was but an error in them, *1 Cor. 8. 4.* and by that judgement of his you see the unobligingnesse of that interdict, *Act. 15.*) and therefore (in like manner, as before) those, that were better instructed then they, ought to have that charity to them, as not to doe any thing in their presence which might by the example draw them to venture on that which was against their conscience, especially considering, that they had not know-

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ledge or understanding enough to judge how *nothing* an *Idoll* was ver. 7.

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Having thus compared the Romans and Corinthians with the Galatians, and given some account of the reason of their different usage, it will not be amisse to adde what *S. Chrysostome* observes to be the cause of the like difference in Saint *Pauls* behaviour to the *Colossians* from that fore-mentioned to the *Romans*. It is speciall a passage in his proeme to the Epistles. Where having mentioned the order wherein the Epistles were written, different from the order of setting them in our booke, concludes that this was no unprofitable disquisition, for thereby many passages in the book would be interpreted: As, that *Rom. 14.* he *descends to the weak brethren*, but not so *Col. 2.* which saith he was for no other reason, but because, that to the *Romans* was written before the other, and therefore as Physicians and Masters deal not so sharply with Scholars or Patients at first, as afterwards, so the Apostle in the beginning, *συναλαβάνει τιδάκους, οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἔτι*, adding that he was not so familiar with the *Romans* as yet, having never been amongst them at the time of writing that Epistle to them, as appeareth *Rom. 1. 15.*

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By all this, 'tis clear indeed, that those which are thus *weake* (either in the notion of *babes* or *sick men*) so that they are not able to discern lawfull from unlawfull (as the *Idoll to be nothing*, *1 Cor. 8.7.*) meerly for want of sufficient instruction, or somewhat proportionable to that, principles of understanding, or the like; but especially if they received those errors or mistakes together with their *Christianity* from the *Apotle*, or from the *Church* which gave them *baptisme*, they must then, 1 in *meeknesse* be instructed, and cured of their ill habit of soul: 2 not be *vilified* or reproacht: yea thirdly, be so *charitably* considered, that till they have received satisfaction of conscience and reformation of error, we are not to doe any thing in their presence, that may by the example bring them to doe what their conscience is not perswaded to be lawfull, or if we doe, we are said to *scandalize a weak brother*, i.e. an erroneous Christian. But then withall 'tis as clear: 1. That those who have first received the true doctrine, and are for some good time rooted in it, that are otherwise taught by the *Church* that gave them *baptism*, are not within the compass of this the *Apostles* care,

care, but (as the Galatians) to be reprehended, chid, and shamed out of their childish errors, these diseases of soule that their own *itching eares* have brought upon them : 2 That they that have knowledge in other things, nay are able to distinguish as critically as any, even to divide a person from himselfe, and obey one when they assault the other, (and by their subtlety in other matters demonstrate their blindnesse in this one to be the effect of malice, of passion, of lusts, of carnality, and not of any blameleſſe infirmity or impotence) are againe excluded from the Apostles care : and so thirdly, that they that are come to these errors by the infusions of *false teachers*, which not the providence of God, but their owne choice hath helpt them to, preferring every new *payſon* before the ancient dayly *food* of soules, have no right to that care of providence of the Apostle, any farther then every kinde of finner hath right to every thing in every fellow Christians power which may prevent or cure his malady, i. e. by the generall *large* rule of *charity*, and not the *cloſer* particular law of *Scandal*. Nay fourthly, that the case may be ſuch, and the adverſaries of *Christian Liberty*, the opposers of the uſe of lawfull ceremonies ſo contrary to *weake blameleſſe* miſtakers that it may be duty not to allow them the leaſt *temporary compliance*, but then to expreſſe moſt zeale in retaining our lawfull *indifferent obſervances*, to vindicate our liberty from enſlavers, when the truth of Christ would be diſclaimed by a cowardly condeſcending, the adverſaries of our faith confirmed and heightened, and the true weakling ſeduced, (a copy of which we read in *St Peters Epitome*, *Gal. 2. 12.* and *Barnabas* and the *Jewiſh* converts being carried away with it, *v. 13.* falling by his example into the ſame fault of diſſimulation, puſillanimity, non-profession of the truth) which is a moſt proper kind of *scandal*, as frequent and incident, as any, and ſo being as dangerous, as fit alſo to be prevented. To which I might add a fifth proposition alſo, That the Apostles ſpeech of *Scandal* *Rom. 14.* and *1 Cor. 8.* hath been thought by holy men among the *ancients* to have much of *civility* in it, at the moſt to be but an *act* of *Apostolical* care for thoſe weak ones, (proportionable to thoſe which in other places he preſcribes for every other kind of finner) both which are far enough from being able to infer any *claim* or *challenge* of thoſe weak for themſelves, any farther

then what the first part of it amounts to, that of instruction ; or at least the second, that of not being vilified, as the sick hath right to the Physitian, to cure him and not to reproach him, civilly to get him out of his malady, *i. e.* to rectifie not to scoffe at his mistake. For that he should challenge any right to the third part of that care, that he should restrain me from the use of my lawfull liberty, because else he will sin against his own conscience, do after me what he resolves unlawfull to do, supposes a wilfull sin of his to be to him a foundation of *dominion* over me, and so that every man that will thus *damne* himself, doth for that merit and *acquire* *command* over me, which if it be supposed, is sure as wild an extravagant *irregular* way to *power*, as that of its being founded in *gratia*, or any that these worst dayes experience hath taught us.

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Having thus far expatiated on this last kinde of scandall, and taken in that which is proper to it, and also that which is more distant from it, I shall now resolve it necessary to adde yet one thing more instrumentall to the understanding of this kinde of *Scandall* in the stricter notion of it, by way of farther caution and restraint, and 'tis this, that

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This being *offended*, stumbling and falling in this third and last sense, is not to be extended to all kinds of sins, which a man may commit upon occasion of another mans *indifferent* action ; but onely to that *one kinde*, that consists in doing that after him, either *doubting* or *against* *conscience*, which he did with an *instructed* *Conscience* ; or at most to this other kind also, of doing some unlawfull thing which anothers lawfull action was yet by *mistake* conceived to give *authority* to ; and which that man probably would not have done, had not that *mistaken example* thus embolden'd him. For if all sins that by any accident might be occasioned by my *indifferent* action, should come under the nature of being *offended* or *scandaliz'd*, consequently I must be interdicted all *indifferent actions* at all times, because at all times each of them may *occasion* (by *some accident*) some sin in another : and 'twill be i mpossible for me to foresee or comprehend all such accidents that may occasion such sins. An action of mine may by accident produce a contrary effect ; my *fasting* from flesh may move another (that *dislikes* me), by way of *opposition* to me,

to

to eat flesh, though in *Conscience* he be perswaded he ought not ; as in *Philosophy* there is a thing call'd *Antiperistasis* (by which excessive cold produces heat) and *equivocall generations* ; as when living creatures are begotten of dust and slime : and for such *accidentall*, perhaps contrary productions, no *law* makes provision, no *care* is effectuall : onely for such effects, that *per se*, of their own accord are likely to follow, (as transcribing a *Copy* is a proper consequent only to the writing of it) these the law of the *Apostle* belongs to, and to them our *care* and spirituall *prudence* must be joyned, so that we doe nothing, though to us never so lawfull, which we have reason to fear, that another who thinks it unlawfull, may yet, without satisfying his conscience, be likely to do after us, or on occasion of which he may probably do something else, which otherwise he would not venture to do.

Having thus far dealt in the retaile, and gone over all the kinds of *Scandall* single, we may now ascend to the consideration of all in grosse, and then also these Corollaries will be found true, that from all the kinds of *Scandall* it is clear. 1. *That no man is offended or scandalized, but he that falls into some sin* ; and therefore to say I am scandalized, in the Scripture sense is to confess I have done that which I ought not to have done : and then my only remedy must be repentance and amendment.

2. *That to be angry, grieved, troubled, at any action of another, is not [to be offended] in the Scripture sense, nor consequently doth it follow, that I have done amiss in doing that which another man is angry at, unless my action be in it self evill.* For if it be not, then first, *he is angry without cause*, and that is his fault, not mine ; yea, and *neivs & seadov*, he judges or censures his brother, that hath done no hurt, which the *weak* is forbid to doe, *Rom. 14.3.* And secondly, he is of all men most unlikely to do that after me, which he is angry at me for doing ; and therefore I have least reason to fear, or possibility to foresee, that he will be *scandaliz'd* in the Scripture phrase : which fear or foresight were the only just motive to me to abstain from any justifiable indifferent action.

The occasion of the mistake, (or, in the *Philosophers* stile, the *distor in iudicis*) the reason that men think it a fault to do any indifferent thing, that another is *angry* or *displeased at*, is, first, the equivocalnesse of the English phrase, to be offended, for that in

English signifies to be displeased : but in Greek (the language wherein the New Testament is written) it signifies no such matter, unless by accident, when *being displeased with Christ*, makes a man *deny him and forsake him* : but then also 'tis not the being displeased, but the forsaking or denying him that is meant by being offended, that is, *scandaliz'd*.

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Or 2. the use of a word that sounds like this in that notable chapter concerning Scandall, *Rom. 14.* for there indeed v. 15. this phrase is used, [if with thy meat, i. e. with thy eating, thy brother is grieved, or made sorry.] Where yet 1. I hope 'twill be much more just that that one single word should receive its importance from the whole context, then the whole context from that one word. The whole context from the 13. to the last verse belongs to the third sort of *Scandall*, when a weak brother seeing me eat what is lawfull for me, because my Conscience is instructed, follows me, and eats too, though it be with a *doubting* or *resisting Conscience*, and so falls into sin ; as appeareth v. 14. to him that thinketh a thing unclean or unlawfull, to him it is so ; and therefore if he shall doe it, he sins by so doing, and v. 23. be that doubteth is damned if he eat ; and therefore in all probability that must be the meaning of the 10. verse also. [Is grieved] i.e. wounded, or falls into sin : explained by three words v. 21. *flum-bling*, being offended, and being *weak* or *sick*. And so it may easily be resolv'd to signify. For 2. *ανηδ* grief, may be taken for the cause of grief, a disease, or wound, or fall, &c. as *fear* in Scripture signifies *danger*, which is the cause of *fear*, according to a vulgar *Hebraism* ordinary in the *New Testament*, where for want of the conjugation *hiphil*, which in Hebrew signifies [to make to do any thing] the Greek is fain to use the active to *do*. An observation which *Hugo Grotius* makes use of to explain that phrase (I shall not enquire how truly) *Mat. 19.9.* and resolves that there *μοιχατει* [committeth adultery] must signify [maketh her from whom he divorceth to commit adultery] parallel to what we read, *Mat. 5.23.* So also *πειθει* to bewaile, *2 Cor. 12.21.* signifies to punish, to use sharpnesse, which will cause grief, or wailing in them that suffer it. This word is very near this other of which we now speak ; and therefore *Hesychius* (the best Glossary for the New Testament) renders *πειθει* both by *ονυμοσα* calamity,

mity, and λύπη grief, i.e. grief and the cause of grief; which is also very observable in the use of this very word λυπή or λυπήν in the Septuagint; the word חָלָב which signifies infirm or weak, 117 or sick, being rendred λυπήν *Lam. 1.22.* וְחָלָב μή λυπήται where we render *my heart is faint*, and so *Isa. 1.15.* וְאָזָה חָלָב εִס λύπָה, the *whole heart is faint*, by faintnesse meaning sicknesse, which is the cause of grief; and therefore the same Hebrew word is in other places rendred אָלָב, affliction or pain, and וְאָלָב disease, *Deut. 7.15.* agreeable to the 21 verse of that *Rom. 14.* where stumbling or being offended is explained by being made weak, which phrase is not to be taken in the sense that weaknesse is used in v. 1, 2. that of infirmitie or error (for such he is, before stumbling) but in this other, as weaknesse and disease, i.e. sin, are all one. So also another Hebrew word נָכָר which signifies perdition and destruction, & is frequently rendred by ἀπολεία, is once interpreted חָלָב, *Pro. 31.6.* ὁ ἐν λύπαις, for which our English read, ready to perish; very agreeable to which doth Saint Paul here interpret, *grieving the brother by destroying him*, i.e. bringing him into some snare or sin; the notion of Scandall, which all this while we speak of. From all which observations and analogies it will be no rashnesse to conclude, that λυπήται, being grieved, in that place, is perfectly synonymous with ἀλενεῖ, (which we there render is made weak; and in divers places of the New Testament signifies νοσῶς disease or sicknesse, and is so rendred by us, *1 Cor. 5.14.* ἀλενεῖ τις is any man sick?) and with ἀπολεῖται ὁ ἀλενῶν, *1 Cor. 8.11.* in the same matter, thy brother is weak, and dieth or perisheth through weaknesse, and with the like phrase in this chapter also, in the end of v. 15. All which clearly denote the disease or perishing of the soule, i.e. sin, which will destroy, if repentance and mercy intervene not.

The third (which is indeed the main) occasion of the mistake, is an ordinary, but an unjustifiable humour of men, to accuse and condemne all whom they doe not like, i.e. a desire to lay some crime to the charge of them, with whom they are angry, if it be but se defendendo, that they may not be said to be angry without a cause, and when they cannot find any such reall crime, then they flye to the case of Scandall, and mistaking that for offending or displeasing, or occasioning anger and dislike, their being angry with

with them, must make them with whom they are angry, criminous ; which what a circle it is, first, to be *angry without a cause*, and then to make that a cause of anger, (i.e. a sin in the other) because I am *angry*, I conceive will not be hard for any to understand.

Sect. 37. I will onely add, that if another mans displeasure or anger at my indifferent action, should make that my indifferent action a sin against him, then any mans sin of uncharitableness against me must make me to be uncharitable, for so I shoud be, if I sinned against him in scandalizing him ; but if I were not so before, his sin (being utterly accidentall and extrinsecall to me) shall not, I hope, make me to be so now.

Sect. 38. To all which I shall here insert this appendage, that even for proper-scripture-scandals, the criminousnesse of them is not to be measured by the event, but by the naturall scandalousnesse, or aptnesse to give *Scandalls* inherent in them ; for I conceive God passes Judgment upon sinners by intuition, not by preision, by seeing what the sin is in it self, and in the aggravating circumstances that are inseparable from it, (as that it is apt to give scandals, &c.) not by the casuall consequents that may possibly either follow or not follow. And I conceive, that that opinion of the Papists (on which they lay part of the foundation of their Purgatory) that men may after their Deaths sin, and have more acts of sin lying on them, (by reason of other men sinning by the scandal which they gave in their lives) then they had at their Death, and so require in just recompence, some punishments increaseable above what they could be adjudg'd to at their death, is but a phansy or Schoole notion, that hath some shew of truth, but little substance, seeing God punisheth every man by the verdict of his owne Conscience ; and therefore that other sin, which my sin is apt to produce in another, will be by way of aggravation, laid to my charge by God, that sees my heart, and the inherent scandalousnesse of that action of mine, (though that other man by the grace of God doe resist the Temptation which my Scandal gave him) as much as if he had not resisted it, and so as his not sinning shall not excuse and lessen my fault which was apt to have brought him to sin ; so in like manner, if he do not resist the temptation, or if by occasion of it, he fall by accident (i. e. by the motion

ion of some other part of his temper) into some other sin, to wit that of causelße anger (which no action of another can be said apt to produce; for if it might, the anger would cease to be causelße) this accidentall fall of his shall not add to the sinfulness of my act, any more then his former not sinning did detract from it, nor consequently make it sinfull, if of it self it were not so.

(You will best judge of this truth by an example. That *Heliodor* a Bishop committed a fault first in writing, then in setting forth an amorous light fiction or *Romance*, and then improving that fault by choosing rather to lose his Bishoprick then to subscribe the condemnation of his work, is and may be reasonably acknowledged; That some also by reading that author have since been transported to the commission of some sins, may not improbably be imagined; but having granted all this (and withall that the aptness to give such *Scandal*, was matter of aggravation to his sin) let me now suppose, that immediately after his death that book had been burnt (as before his death it was condemn'd) when he was no longer able to preserve it, would the Councils condemning and committing that execution upon that work, any whit have mitigated his sentence in Heaven? to affirme that, were to suppose Purgatory, or somewhat like it, or else that God by his foresight of that act of the councill should have allowed him that mitigation at the day of his particular judgment, i.e. imputed the easewell future actions of others to the present acquitting of him; and then, besides the many inconveniences that might attend such concessions, it must also follow, that every reprinting of that book since that time, hath been a damnable sin (not only of giving *Scandal* to such as have been since infected by it, but especially) of uncharitableness to that poor dead Bishop, in increasing his Torments, or making them capable of increase ever since, by giving him a capacity of corrupting more readers; which humanity and charity, and our great obligations to the nature of which we partake, would not permit any good Christian to doe willingly; and besides, though our prayers may not be allowed to be able to fetch souls out of Purgatory, yet such a not-reprinting of his book might doe somewhat like it, prevent the inlargement of his pains, though not make expiation for him. So again, when those obscene pictures that historians mention (as I remember in

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Tiberius his time) after the Authors death were burnt, and not permitted liberty to corrupt the eyes of posterity, but *Aretynes* have had that luck to doe it, it would by that School-reason follow, that *Aretyne* though in the work and the design but equall sinner, were yet by this mishap of not perishing, become far more criminally guilty, then that other Authour; which sure to affirm were a very irrationall nicey.

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3. A third Corollary, from the view of all the places together, will be this, that to give *Scandal* is then most criminous, when it signifies by my example to bring another man to a sin, especially if this scandalous action of mine be of it self a sin, abstracted from the sin adherent of *Scandal*; and then let any indifferent man judge in what degree may those be truly said to scandalize or offend others, (or indeed how they can be excused from that crime) who by being angry with me without a cause, and so committing that sin against Christ's law, *Math. 5. 22.* doe also by so doing not only provoke and tempt me to anger back again, which is a sin in me, if I yeeld to it, and that more then accidentally caused by them that provoke me, *Eph. 6. 4.* but give other men, who have a good opinion of their Judgement and sanctity, a plain pattern of that sin of uncharitableness to transcribe and copy out, I mean, to sin also by causlesse anger.

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4. That the great sin of *Scandal* in the use of things indifferent, that St. Paul speaks of, and resolves against, *Rom. 14.* is the sin of uncharitableness, or pride in despising and not condescending to the weak brother, meaning by the weak brother not every one that may fall into any sin, (for so every one living will come under that title) but particularly in him that is ἀδεινὸς τῷ πίστει, weak and ignorant, and unsettled in the Faith; as it is opposed to the strong, i. e. the knowing Christian.

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And then let any judge whether this can belong to them who profess themselves leaders of others, and would be unwilling to be counted ignorant, and particularly who in the points wherein they profess themselves to be offended, are so knowingly resolv'd, that they will never be induced to do that after me which they affirm themselves scandalized at: which you may discern, because they are angry and inveigh against me for doing of it, and do not so much as pretend that they are by my example inclined to doe what

what I do, and so scandalized, but only angry at me, or my *Action*, and so offended.

Mean while I cannot but confess that any mans wilfull sinne, *Sect. 43.* though it cannot be called weaknesse in our vulgar notion; yet in the other notion of *weaknesse*, for disease of soul, it may wel pass; and deserve to be the object of my charity and compassion, as much or more then *weaknesse* is: and therefore the uncharitablenesse of my brother or his causlesse anger against me being such, I conceive my self bound to use any lawfull means which I can hope may be able to prevent any such sin in him, or to get or recover him out of it; especially if that sin of his may become probably over and above his uncharitablenesse, a means to stop or hinder him in his course of reformation, or farther growth in piety; as probably it will be, if I, against whom he is thus unjustly wroth, be his lawfull Pastor; for then that causlesse anger or rage of his against me may, through his farther default, occasion in him some vow or resolution, never to hear me, never to be moved or perswaded by me in any thing, that out of the Pulpit or in private reasoning or exhortation, I shall (never so convincingly) propose unto him.

In this case it may be demanded, whether I ought in charity to abstain from this indifferent action, which I foresee will be the matter, though not the cause of all this sin in him, of uncharitablenesse and non proficency in his Christian course, and whether if I doe not so abstain, this be not to scandalize my brother? To which I briefly answer, 1. That this anger or uncharitablenesse of his, is not the being scandaliz'd in the Scripture sense, nor consequently in that respect my *Action* a Scandall, though it be the matter of the anger, or that which he is angry with.

Secondly, 'tis true indeed that his resolving against my preaching is in him to be *Scandaliz'd*, i. e. to fall and be stopt in the service of God: but this only in a generall sense; as every other such hardhearted obdurate resisting of Gods grace is, or may be called also: and that which occasions this being *Scandaliz'd*, is not my indifferent action, but his anger or uncharitable conceit of me for it, unless equivocally, or remotely, as my action is the object of that anger, which anger is the author of that prophane resolution.

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Yet thirdly, if I might foresee that my indifferent action would occasion, though unjustly, his anger, and his anger produce the effect before mentioned, I think I should doe well to abstain from that indifferent action, in charity to him.

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Maimon. de I.
col. c. 5.

But that with these cautions, 1. Unlesse my indifferent action be ordinable to some good Christian use, and designed by me to it; for then, as the *Jewes* resolve that a Tree set for fruit, though it chance to be worship't, is not made unlawfull by that means; so that indifferent *usefull* action of mine will not be made unlawfull by the possibility of that ill consequent: Or secondly, unlesse that action in it self indifferent, by lawfull authority be commanded, and so cease to be indifferent to me who am under that authority: Or thirdly, unlesse my abstaining may as probably prove matter of anger to some other of contrary persuasions: Or fourthly, unlesse that my abstaining, or receding, or undoing what before I had done, be more likely to confirme him in his errour (which otherwise in time being not yeelding to, he may forsake) then to prevent or allay his causelesse anger and those effects of it: Or fifthly, unlesse I use some means in prudence not only sufficient, but probable to prevent this sin of unjust anger in him before, or to reform it afterward.

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But if my abstaining be like to fall into all or any of these inconveniences, then sure I ought not thus to abstain; because when these consequences do attend my abstaining, they are nearer and more immediate to my abstaining, then his resolving against my preaching, is to my doing of it.

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And another consideration also may be taken, that he that will so causelesly be angry and resolve against the ordinary means of his salvation, will by the suggestion of the Devill or temptation of his own corrupt humour, be likely to finde out some other matter of quarrell against me and my Preaching, i.e. against his own salvation, though I by abstaining from that particular action deprive him of that.

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And lastly, though I shall not define, yet I would have it considered, whether he that is so disposed in foul and affection, that so gives up the reines of his passions, as upon every or no occasion to break out into causelesse anger, uncharitableness, and the effects of it forementioned, be at all the more innocent or lesse culpable

culpable in the sight of God by the not committing of some one act of that sin only through wanting that or any other one occasion of committing that act. For as in good things God accepts the will for the deed, (if it be a firme and ratified will, a full actuall intention, and want nothing but opportunity to shew it self) and again accepts him that hath exprest that will by ten only acts, being by want of opportunity deprived of a possibility of adding one act more to the number, as well as him, which having the opportunity that the other wanted, hath exceeded him in the number of outward acts: So there may be some reason to fear, that an unresisted unrestrained propension or consent to evill that wants nothing but an occasion to actuate it, will be as criminious in the sight of God, as if (without any improvement or change, but only by meeting with that occasion) it break forth into act: or that an habituall inclination to sin in one man ten times actuated in the members, having no more occasions to actuate it, shall be as sadly punished, as the same degree of inclination and intention through presence of occasion once more actuated.

The same consideration will be proper to other particulars incident to the matter of Scandal. As when any thirsty drunkard actually importunate in the pursuit of his espoused sin, shall by occasion of my feast fall into an open act of that sin (and a hundred the like.) The question then may be, whether supposing him bent to excess, and not only habitually guilty of it, but actuall intent upon it, and only kept off by want of occasion, he would have had lesse guilt upon his soul, if I had not then invited him. I conceive it hard to maintain the affirmative; for though with men, who see not the heart, no sin is punishable but that in the members, (unless in case of Treason) yet with God the sin of the heart and the hand seems to be equally great, the act of the mind and the act of the body: And the minutely preparations of that to sin as punishable, as the minutely execution of this. As in the Schoolmens resemblance the pressing of the stone to the ground is as great when it is withheld by my hand, as when it is actually moving towards the center.

I confess there is somewhat to be said, and perhaps with probability on the one side. And I think S. *Augustine* somewhere

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expresseth his opinion, that though in good things God mercifully accepts the will for the deed, yet out of the same mercy and indulgence he punisheth *not so* in evill things: Yet because S. *Augustine* may herhaps mean the incomplet and not perfect act of the will, (which though we yeeld to be lesse then the outward act, yet the compleat act of the will, wanting nothing but opportunity of execution, may still be as great) Or however, because there are not such demonstrable grounds of resolution, as to yeeld clear conviction to all in this matter, and to assure the Christian, that such an addition of any outward act of sin shall make the punishment the heavier to the habituall sinner, and so the absence of that outward act alleviate it; therefore although I said I think he should do well to abstain, I dare not yet affirme that he is bound in charity to do so; Nothing but charity binding him to it; and the man that still hath that p[ro]p[ensi]on unrefuted, being (upon this supposition, which we have made not improbable) like to reape little profit from that charity.

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of Maliciousnesse, but as the servants of God. 1 Pet. 2.16.

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement. Mat. 5. 22. ;

OF



